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NO "CEASE FIRE" YET

During the past week the news from Athens has consisted largely of cheerful speculations on the probability of an early end to the tragic war in which Mr. Churchill has involved us. The tone of all these messages was much the same. They foresaw the acceptance of the new office of Regent by the Metropolitan of Athens, with the general consent of the nation. They assumed that he would appoint a new provisional government on a coalition basis, and that E.A.M., adequately represented in this new Ministry, would then consent to the disbandment of its guerilla army. These anticipations should be received with some caution, for they may be designed to calm public opinion in this country and abroad while reinforcements are making their way to the Piræus. The ominous fact that stands out amid all these pleasant anticipations is that as yet the King has not assented to a Regency and no negotiations have taken place.

Mr. Macmillan has talked to Mr. Papandreou and other Athenian politicians, but as yet neither he nor General Scobie has condescended to talk face to face either with Professor Svolos, the civilian head of E.A.M., or with General Sarafis, the Chief of Staff of its troops. They still face a demand for unconditional surrender, since General Scobie requires not merely the disarmament of all the partisans of E.A.M. in Athens, but the placing of all its forces in the rest of the country under his orders. This means the suspension for an unlimited period of Greek sovereignty and the acceptance without qualification of British authority over the whole field of Greek affairs, internal and external. These are impossible terms to address to an Allied people, and if Mr. Churchill persists in them we shall find ourselves committed, not merely to the suppression of the armed civilian supporters of E.A.M. in Athens, but to the conquest of a country that ranks among the most difficult terrains in Europe, held by seasoned troops, who have not yet come into action.

To conquest, if it is unconditional surrender we demand, there is only one alternative, and that is to reduce the people of Greece by a hunger blockade. Of the two methods, this is the grimmer and the uglier, for when it comes to starvation it is children, women and the aged who succumb first. If we interpret the news correctly, this form of pressure is being applied already. Mr. Lehmann, Director-General of U.N.R.R.A., announces that the British military authorities have ordered him to withdraw his mission from Greece. The official explanation for this order is that some of its personnel have been wounded. This is a dishonest excuse. There is fighting in Attica, and only there. E.A.M. is in peaceful and undisputed possession of Volos, Salonica, Kavala and other lesser ports. U.N.R.R.A. could unload and distribute its stores of food in any of these centres without risk to the lives and limbs of its officials. By this order General Scobie, doubtless under Mr. Churchill's direction, has begun the hunger blockade of Greece.

All the news makes it clear that Mr. Churchill's sources of information were grossly at fault. He seems to have been the victim of his own sevenfold censorship, which Mr. Philip Jordan (who was *News Chronicle* correspondent on the spot) describes on another page. The King's supporters may count for something in the wealthy Greek colony in Cairo, but in Greece, as the *Times* correspondent states, they are so "negligible" that they "may be ignored." It cannot be easy to estimate the numerical following of the various parties in Greece, where there has been no free, above-ground, political life since the King imposed a Fascist Dictatorship eight years ago. But on one fact we may rely. E.A.M. could not have liberated most of rural Greece and many of its smaller towns from the Germans by hard fighting, unless it had possessed the confidence of most of the Greek nation. The section of it that stood aloof, collaborated with the Nazis and formed the notorious Security Battalions, was certainly a minority. E.A.M. is not, as the Prime Minister has been led to believe, a Communist organisation bent on violent revolution. Its recognised leaders, Mr. Svolos and General Sarafis, are both of them Liberals, who preside over a coalition of half a dozen groups of the Centre and Left. The current belief that a "civil war" is raging is mistaken. Apart from Colonel Zervas, a brave but irresponsible *condottiere*, with a relatively small force behind him, which is active only in Epirus, the men who are fighting for the King consist of two formations armed by us, who are fighting under General Scobie's orders—(1) the Athenian Gendarmerie, originally raised to hold down the capital under the Metaxas Dictatorship, and (2) the royalist Mountain Brigade, re-formed in Egypt, after we had purged the army of its republican soldiers and interned them.

While we share the general hope that the Metropolitan Archbishop will take over the regency, there is much more to be done before we may hope for an honourable escape from this wanton and hateful war. The Mountain Brigade and the Gendarmerie cannot be left to overawe Athens, while the troops of E.A.M. are disarmed. There is still some hard fighting to be done to drive the Germans out of Rhodes and Crete. Let them take their share of that work and when it is done let them be demobilised. We are also disposed to back the suggestion which comes from America that an Allied rather than a British Commission should supervise the elections and the plebiscite that must one day be held. Mr. Churchill's impartiality has not impressed either the Greeks or his own countrymen. But two decisions are due at once, and the electorate will not forgive the Government that fails to take them before Christmas dawns. Let the "Cease fire" sound, and with it let us end our blockade.

Rundstedt Stakes High

Through the censorship black-out only a dim picture so far emerges of the counter-offensive which Field-Marshal von Rundstedt launched last Sunday. Delivered on the hitherto inactive sector of the front between Monschau and the Moselle, the attack appears to have had two armoured spear-heads. One broke quickly through between Malmedy and St. Vith; the other, south of the Ourthe, struck towards Bastogne, an important road junction in the Allies lateral communications between Liège and

Luxembourg. It is evident that von Rundstedt must have drawn heavily on his ultimate reserve of armoured divisions rebuilt since the Battle of France. With the Allied forces massed in the north (and there temporarily immobilised by the flooded valleys of the Roer and Maas) and with General Eisenhower's southern group of armies heavily committed in the Saar and Vosges, the German commander saw an opportunity, and took it. To what extent he will commit his relatively limited number of armoured and Panzer Grenadier divisions it is still too early to judge. In "forcing" a battle of movement on Belgian soil, he is gambling—on the calculation, presumably, that by the spring Germany's position would be relatively worse. What we do not know is how ambitious are his intentions. To relieve the pressure on the Cologne and Saar fronts by compelling the Allies to regroup? To disrupt the Allies' supply system round Liège? Until the full weight of the attack is measurable, its objectives must remain obscure. But, whatever be the developments ahead, various unanswered questions are already being asked. Did the enemy concentration for this attack take place unnoticed? Did the Allies "ask for it" by neglecting imprudently a sector in which German tactics in 1940 should have been remembered? Did we seriously over-estimate the disruption caused by air attack in the communications on which von Rundstedt had to rely? The impression is prevalent that the enemy, in the initial phase, profited unduly by the element of surprise.

Burma's Future

The recent debate on the future of Burma did little to define the Government's intentions. Mr. Amery reviewed with ominous sympathy the proposals contained in the "Blue Print" drawn up by a group of Conservative Members of Parliament, but he was careful to commit himself to nothing specific. A period of transition and re-construction will doubtless have to follow the end of the military operations. But to delay the grant of Dominion Status for as much as six years, as the Blue Print proposes, would be intolerable. In withdrawing, we adopted a scorched earth policy, with the result that we and the Japanese between us have pretty thoroughly ruined the whole capital equipment of the country. If in the transitional period a British Governor takes charge with a nominated council of Burmese Yes-men, it is to be foreseen that "reconstruction" will mean primarily the entrenchment as before of British Big Business which will exploit the major resources of the country, while Indian usurers and merchants will come back to their own on a lower level. In the last period of British rule Burma exported in value twice as much as she imported. This gives a rough measure of the extent to which the profits drawn from the exploitation of her labour and natural resources were drained away to foreign pockets. Japanese rule has been in many ways oppressive and brutal, but it did end their particular forms of exploitation. The urgent problem of the future is to re-plan Burmese economy so that these evils shall not return. From Burman critics of the Blue Print comes the demand that the Governor, during the interim period, shall be a Burman. Further, they call for an amnesty for the Burmese nationalists who so far collaborated with the Japanese as to accept "independence" as their gift. We cannot hope to win the trust of the people as a whole, if we recognise only the conservative pro-British minority. For our part we suggest an enquiry into the feasibility of socialising the oil industry. On this and kindred matters it might be helpful to call in the help and advice of Australia and New Zealand which happen to have Labour Governments.

Two Salutary Defeats

It was a thoroughly good thing that the platform at the Labour Party Conference got beaten twice over resolutions moved from the floor; and it was all the better because both defeats were on issues of primary importance. The Reading resolution made clear the determination of the delegates to insert a real element of basic Socialism into the Labour Party's immediate programme; while the resolution on India, admitting the right of the Indians to independence, if they want it, and demanding the immediate release of political prisoners, was a salutary rebuke to the ambiguous line hitherto taken by the party leadership. The Executive's plan for post-war control of industry was not in itself at all a bad plan: indeed, it embodied a great deal with which the supporters of the Reading resolution had no desire to quarrel. What they wanted (and got) was an addition to it making plain that the Labour Party, in the coming General Election, will stand for "the transfer to public ownership of the land, large-scale building, heavy industry, and all forms of banking, transport, and fuel and power," not at some uncertain time in the future, but as part of the immediate election programme. This will be a tough morsel for some of the Party leaders to swallow; but we feel sure the Conference did the right thing. Labour, if it fails to fight on its own Socialist programme, is in danger of having nothing at all on which it can effectively fight.

Education: The Next Steps

The Labour Party Conference also got down on its final day to the question of education. It was naturally critical of the preferential position in which the public schools which remain outside the State system are left under the new Act; and delegates were worried about what is going to happen when free secondary education in the State schools comes in next April. With the State schools in many areas ill-prepared, there is obviously danger of a boom in private schools making a snob appeal and of a further entrenchment of minor public schools, which will be unhampered by the Burnham restrictions on salaries and conditions in the State secondary schools. A good many of our readers who are secondary school teachers took us to task for welcoming the Burnham Committee's proposals. We did so because we believe it to be of fundamental importance both to raise conditions in the elementary schools and to put primary and secondary teachers on a common footing. But we entirely agree that highly qualified teachers (whether their qualification be a good honours degree or something else as good of its kind) ought to get a really substantial increment, and that the Burnham proposals are unsatisfactory on this score, the more so because they widen the gulf between teachers inside and outside the State system.

Building Castles in Greater London

To study Professor Abercrombie's Plan for Greater London is to be brought sharply up against the unreality of the Government's reconstruction policies. Here is a grand scheme for making London a great and worthy city; everybody will support it; nearly everybody will agree that in broad outline it provides the right model for rehousing the people of London; and hardly anyone will expect even a tenth part of it to be carried out unless there is a root-and-branch upheaval in the conduct of our political affairs. There are one hundred and thirty-one separate Planning Authorities in Greater London to-day; and we have just been told again that the Government has no intention of proposing any major changes in the structure of Local Government. Professor Abercrombie's special Planning Board, with overriding authority over the whole of the Greater London area, is indispensable for the execution of his plan; but a Government which has refused planning facilities to Plymouth and Southampton, where the problem is relatively simple, will certainly not permit them for Greater London, where it is infinitely more complicated. Professor Abercrombie may plan nobly; but he is likely to go down to history as the second man who was not allowed to rebuild Londo

PARLIAMENT: Greece Again

Wednesday, 4.30 p.m.

In accordance with a time-honoured tactic, number of Tories found long-drawn-out avenu to explore in a motion about the film indust and in a Church Assembly measure, which ha not been expected to take up much time—tha lessening (no doubt innocently) the time ava able for the Adjournment debate on Greece i sisted on by the Labour Party (as a sheep migh insist on saying "Baa" to a wolf).

Once more it fell to Arthur Greenwood "speak for England." He did so with dignit patriotism and some of his old fire and decisio Mr. Churchill was absent. On this occasion, to the Liberal Party weighed in—"weighed" perhaps the verb appropriate to any speech b Sir Percy Harris, who is worthy rather than sci tillating—in broad support of the Labour Par Sir Percy said, however, that he was not asham of having voted for the Government on the pr vious occasion. The Tories, with their usu cleverness, put up to speak several young office who had lately been serving in the Medite ranean: one of these, Wing-Commander Robi son, deprecated criticisms of Mr. Churchill making mischief between the Allies, and eulogise "the spirit of Greece" and the non-political Gre "man in the street." All the Tories, in fac were full of tragic emotion and homely sentimen the Left were edged into a position of factio cynicism. From this they were rescued b Aneurin Bevan, who pursued a point first raise by Driberg earlier in the day—the shame a horror of the bombing of the Parthenon. E.A.M. had wished to stage a *coup*, he argue they could have done so easily before we lande when the Germans were on the way out. The was a great Tory outcry (Hogg: "What is th colour bar?") when he condemned the use Indian troops in Greece.

Students of capitalist decline will find much interest them in Tuesday's Hansard: the exposu by two Tory M.P.s of a piece of private enterpri by British Celanese, of which Dalton remarke that it was "unfortunate and regrettable," a (when Shinwell asked what it mattered to mo of us) that "on the whole, straight dealing better than crooked dealing" (loud cheers); th admission by Sir George Courthorpe, Chairma of the Forestry Commission, that he was "n happy" about his personal connection with a association implicated in selling Christmas tre at extortionate prices; the renewed allegations b Austin Hopkinson against B.O.A.C. and Gene Critchley.

These last went unanswered because they we raised at short notice and Brabner, the ne Under-Secretary for Air, had no time to b briefed adequately in reply. Even so, and eve with such allowances as may be made for maiden Ministerial speech, it was felt that h dismissed the matter altogether too flippantl

The sequel to this malodorous fiasco was th Moelwyn Hughes attempted by private noti next morning to ask that a Select Committee b appointed to investigate Hopkinson's charge The Speaker declined to permit such a questio his decision was sharply challenged. As th Prime Minister felt bound to rise and indica the matter will be pursued.

The debate on Poland was overclouded by certain gloomy insincerity. Neither of those wh are customarily regarded as the spokesmen the Kremlin made a speech; Mander was pe haps a sufficient substitute. Pickthorn was his pettish best. Labour speakers were mos indeterminate and uneasy, except Ivor Thoma who was vehemently anti-Lublin.

It was unfortunate that the important subje of enemy broadcasts by British subjects shou have come up late on a Friday evening. Ho raised on the Adjournment the specific cases P. G. Wodehouse and Colonel Rocke, but fail to extract from the Attorney-General more th that there was not sufficient evidence to just proceedings.

PONTIFEX MINOR.

POWER POLITICS AND THE BIG THREE

It looks as if Himmler and his friends will spend a happier Christmas than any of us could have wished them. Rundstedt has counter-attacked with effect, and the Allies, as the Nazi leaders always prophesied, have got into difficulties in countries they have liberated. The meeting of the Big Three, which was expected before Christmas to crown the assurance of victory and a united peace, has been, apparently indefinitely, postponed. Mr. Churchill ended his speech last week with a grave warning about the danger of Allied disunity and of a third world war which would sweep away any remnants of our civilisation that survive the present one.

The Premier's speech, as we read it, was directed mainly to the United States of America. When dealing with the future of this country, the Empire and of civilisation as a whole, Mr. Churchill speaks with an historical sense and a responsible sobriety that is in odd contrast with the bullying language he uses about a small and hungry nation which he assumes himself quickly able to silence. Yet if the catastrophes which cast deep shadows over the Premier's speech should ever come about, they are more likely than not to spring from the passions aroused by the coercion of small nations and militarily insignificant groups.

The United States falls easily into the role of champion of small peoples, just as Britain did in the nineteenth century. The Senate, discussing foreign affairs this week, spoke very much as the House of Commons used to speak in the later nineteenth century. Separated from the European Continent by about as many flying hours as a Channel packet took to go from Folkestone to Boulogne, they feel able at will to enter or withdraw from European conflicts. Conscious that their own source of wealth comes from a rapidly expanding world power which is not dependent on Europe, American Senators, like 19th-century British legislators, naturally fall into the habit of condemning the Old World as the home of dirty politics from whose contamination the white soul of America must be kept unstained. Conscience has free play about Europe, because interest is effectively engaged elsewhere. Americans must reject "power politics"; "spheres of influence" outrage their conception of morality; the wishes of the small nation must count, if America is to play a hand, for just as much as those of the Great Powers with world or continental interests.

This moralising would be less irritating to the rest of the world if the United States were not itself a Great Power up to its neck in the power politics it denounces. Do Senators who denounce "spheres of influence" really forget that the Monroe doctrine is a particularly clear and old-established example of this unsavoury type of politics? More important still, when the United States adopts an unco-operative attitude in such world matters as civil aviation, it is, in fact, playing "power politics" and marking out for itself a sphere of influence as alarming to other nations as any extension of frontiers. True to the parallel with Britain in the late nineteenth century, the United States is building an economic Empire, while denouncing on the highest principles all the vices of imperialism.

Once we are clear that no nation in an anarchic world is in a position to preach sermons to the rest, we may welcome the relative detachment of the United States; indeed, if we can persuade American Senators that the immorality of international politics of which they complain is universal and set their minds to work on the remedy, these waves of Puritan conscience may yet prove a saving grace. Protests about the immorality of world politics only begin to be useful when they recognise the facts of power, and are directed against its misuse. America has the chance of coupling such criticism with proposals for creating a system into which talk of morality may, without hypocrisy, be introduced.

Take first the question of intervention in Greece which so rightly troubles the minds of Americans, as it does of very many in this country. The blunt fact, always clear to students of politics but seldom stated in crude terms by a member of the British Cabinet, was explained by Mr. Bevin at last week's Labour Party Conference. The negotiations that preceded the use of violence by Britain, the question whether E.A.M. was tricked by the British or broke its word in not disarming—these details of timing and manœuvre are not important. Mr. Churchill is attempting to destroy E.A.M., which undoubtedly represents the main part of the national movement of Greece, because he fears Communist influence in an area which he regards as vital to Britain's strategic future. An American would readily understand if Mr. Roosevelt sent troops to clear "dangerous" people who threatened America's undisputed control of Panáma. Once that is grasped, there are two things Americans can usefully say. The first is that, since it is clear that Mr. Churchill was mistaken in regarding E.A.M. as a gang of ruffians, he can do no good at all by becoming embroiled in what amounts to a war with Greece, and that he would in any case better safeguard the interests of Britain by entering into the closest friendship with the popular and dynamic forces of Greece instead of creating throughout the whole country a detestation of Britain.

Americans who are willing to face realities might add a further constructive suggestion. What, they might ask, is a "strategic" base? Why have Americans regarded Panama as a sphere of interest? Clearly because America feared that some day she might be at war with another sea Power—Japan or Great Britain. Similarly, if Mr. Bevin had been rather more frank with the Labour Party Conference, he would have added to his revelation that Russia demanded a free hand in Rumania and left Britain a free hand in Greece, the further explanation that the Soviet Union asked for Rumania as a sphere of influence because she had experience of intrigues in the Balkans against her security, while Britain wants to dominate the Ægean because, in the event of war with Russia, she hopes to be in a position to shut the Dardanelles. That is putting the matter bluntly. It is on such strategic considerations that maps are made and future wars plotted, and Americans, who hate power politics, could turn their attention to the old proposal of "internationalising" all such vital points. Why should not the next peace treaty include a system of joint control so that instead of exclusive spheres of rivalry the Powers would have a common interest in peace?

Again, the sensitive conscience of America is aroused about the future of Poland. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden both spoke with admirable clarity on this subject. The Curzon Line represents the fairest approximation to ethnographical and historic justice that can be devised. That the transfer has to be made is the result of the folly of the Poles after the last war, who seized the territory east of the Curzon Line against Allied advice. Settlement of this frontier cannot be postponed until after the war because without a settlement tragic and embittering conflicts beween Poles and Red Army troops are inevitable. One would have thought that American good will for Poland would best be shown in persuading Polish exiles in the United States that their hope of independence, indeed of survival, lies in the formation of a government which accepts Soviet friendship as the basis of its policy. The British Government has done its best on this point, and it is a deplorable tragedy, as Mr. Churchill made clear, that a settlement that would have been acceptable to Mr. Mikolajczyk has been refused by the London Poles.

The suggested Polish settlement is certainly open to criticism. The proposal to "compensate" the Poles for territory to which they can claim little right by passing over to them territory that is wholly German can only be defended on the ground that desperate situations demand desperate remedies. Germans cannot now live under Poles; certainly Poles cannot live under Germans. The Corridor cannot be reconstituted. Less injustices would be done by a transfer that gave East Prussia to the Poles and the Corridor to Germany; greater injustice would result from giving large parts of purely German Silesia, Pomerania and Brandenburg to the Poles. In their more extreme form these large territorial changes, which would involve many years of bitter suffering and render all economic reconstruction impossible, would seem likely to produce not a strong and independent Poland but a weak and dependent Poland.

Those who most emphasise the error of seeking security through frontier changes will only prove useful critics if they suggest methods by which frontiers become less important and security is achieved at less cost. American publicists who encourage the more intransigent Poles, and talk glibly of the wickedness of power politics and spheres of interest, should preface their remarks by reminding the American people that Germany's power to destroy a large part of Russia, to torture and kill her peasants, to penetrate with fire and rapine to the very gates of Moscow was due to the fact that America held aloof from the League, and, together with Britain, actually sold to Hitlerite Germany the arms and materials without which no such attack would have been possible. It is absurd and dishonest to criticise Russia for seeking to create the largest possible sphere of influence if Russians believe that in a few years' time American capital will again be rebuilding Western Germany for another war with Russia. No wonder that Stalin seeks, by domination of the Baltic coast and of the Balkans and by a reassurance treaty with reviving France, to make it for ever impossible for the West again to organise war against the U.S.S.R. He takes, we agree, a method which is bad in principle, but the methods that are morally desirable and which make for permanent peace involve a revolution in the outlook of all the Powers towards the whole post-war world.

"Spheres of interest" and "power politics" are the inevitable result of world anarchy. Their alternative is a system of collaboration between the Powers that goes far beyond Dumbarton Oaks, and provides for an organic relation between the nations and their acceptance of a common obligation to obey an accepted basis of international law. President Wilson was right at least about that. A new voice, speaking with a similar authority from the United States, in whose hands once again are the keys of future peace or war, could begin a process which might reverse the wheels and gradually reduce the suspicions of Moscow. If the International Force outlined at Dumbarton Oaks were genuinely international, if it were proposed to put American, British, French and Russian troops in the same police army, and to submit disputes to disinterested arbitration, then spheres of influence and strategic frontiers could be profitably attacked as the dangerous anachronisms they are. If Henry Wallace, whose gospel of developing the backward and devastated areas of the world by mutual aid is the one imaginative idea yet proposed for the post-war world, were in a position to overrule the plans of American Big Business, then Stalin might take notice of complaints that the U.S.S.R. is shutting off an exclusive sphere of influence for herself. As it is, Stalin is likely to rely on the strength and organising capacity of the U.S.S.R., which will at least not suffer, as America will, from the unemployment and social chaos that seem inevitable in the capitalist anarchy of the U.S.A. It is a gloomy conclusion for the world, but it remains true, seek as we will for ameliorating phrases and soothing gestures, that you cannot have peace in anarchy, internal or external, and that the champions of competitive anarchy cannot profitably preach sermons about the wickedness of power politics and the virtues of brotherly love.

POLITICS IN FRANCE

THE defeat of France in 1940 was mathematically certain. Had there not been one single act of treachery or cowardice, the campaign could not have lasted a week longer, such was the French inferiority in man-power, armour and aircraft. This inferiority was due partly to under-population, partly to inadequate industrialisation, but another main cause was a smouldering class-war. The first question about France's future—and this article must, alas! contain more questions than conclusions—is: Will such warfare be resumed, or will the prodigious task of reconstruction excite the same degree of unity as obtained against the German occupation.

There are grounds for hope. Though most of the rich, even of those who abstained from all collaboration with the Germans, may have learnt nothing, this class has lost much of its power. It is little represented in the Assembly or the press, and by itself it can do little. At the other extreme is the Communist Party, formidable alike in zeal and organisation, but confronted with the most individualistic people in Europe. And in between is the vast majority of the French, ranging from the peasants, better off and more conservative than ever before, to the Socialists and to those new Resistance groups who find the Socialists too sluggish and the Communists too Russian. In this still inchoate central mass the most conspicuous party is formed by the Catholic "Popular Democrats," who have gained a new importance during the Occupation. (Communists will tell you that, apart from themselves, Catholics were the only vigorous Resistants—a story devised to discredit the Socialists.) What support the Popular Democrats will receive from the electorate is uncertain, but it is on these that General de Gaulle, who has hitherto managed like a Constitutional Monarch to remain above controversy, can most confidently rely when he is obliged, as he will be after, if not before, the elections, to define his policy. The Communists will then presumably move into open opposition. At present the Popular Democrats are flirting with the Socialists, and the Socialists with the Communists. Will any alliance result? And what about the M.L.N.? (The *Mouvement de Libération Nationale* unites three Resistance parties of independent origin with little definite programme beyond drastic reforms.) Finally, will the peasants, traditionally anti-clerical and conservative, support Gaulle if he identifies himself with a party that proclaims itself both Catholic and revolutionary?

It would be foolish to hazard any answer to such questions without wide personal experience of opinion in the provinces. And my knowledge derives only from three weeks in Paris and a rapid expedition to the Front in the Alps, during which I talked to very few civilians. One fact that requires emphasis is that only the Resistants are represented in the Assembly or the newspapers. And while only a tiny minority of the French were pro-German, the majority were never in the organised Resistance. How will these distribute their votes? And the women? And the prisoners who, if one may judge by the few who have returned, have been reduced by their privations to a distressing apathy? In Paris, and particularly among the Resistants, with whom I spent most of my time, the Radical and Socialist Parties seem mere phantoms from the past. But there are rumours that in the country men are returning to their old party loyalties. The one fact which I consider certain is that the Communists are losing influence every day.

Let us examine their history as objectively as possible. Until the Armistice they opposed the war as Imperialist, and for this reason their newspapers were suppressed, their deputies exiled. (They now proclaim that they were opposed only to the incompetence with which the "phony" war was conducted, but such propaganda serves only to remind their compatriots of facts which they might otherwise prefer to overlook.) For a year after the Armistice the Communist attitude was ambiguous. They were hostile to the Germans and to Pétain, but also to General de Gaulle. The French authorities, when required by the Germans to select hostages for execution, usually handed over Communists or Jews. Thus the glorious list of Communist martyrs began, and the anti-German activity of the Party increased. Some of their intellectuals were already co-operating with non-Communists to organise Resistance, notably Aragon and Eluard. (In the Vichy zone the first *cadres* of resistance were literary.) After the German attack on the U.S.S.R., the Communists became the most efficient section of the Resistance. They had already a closely knit organisation and experience in clandestine work. Their courage and single-mindedness were beyond praise. Indeed, many non-Communists joined the *Franc Tireurs Partisans* (Communist armed forces), because these fought with such fervour. The Communist contribution to the liberation of France is exalted by all their fellow-Resistants. These even protested against the present Government's decision to disarm the *Milices Patriotiques*, which consisted of what the F.F.I. called "*les sédentaires*," that is, men not in the *maquis*, who had armed themselves not to act before liberation but to police the country afterwards. Most of them were Communists, and it would be unjust alike to their convictions and their courage to suppose that they did not hope to effect a revolution.

For the Communist loss of ground their own propaganda is deeply responsible: *L'Humanité* is not so much a newspaper as a daily manifesto. However beloved by his party, the name of Thorez is not associated with patriotism in the minds of most Frenchmen, nor was it tactful to welcome him back from Moscow as "the chief of the French people." His leadership emphasises the Russian connections of a party which was justly profiting by the patriotic courage of its wartime heads. The Communists have taken as slogans the words *Patrie* and *Union—Patrie*, though they go out of their way to seem more Russian than French, *Union* though their opposition to Gaulle is not the less obvious for being veiled. Finally, they talk of themselves incessantly as the *parti des fusillés*—"the party of the shot," assuming a monopoly of martyrdom that enrages all the other French whose brothers and sons have also been butchered. A Catholic priest who had been prominent in resistance said to me with a chuckle: "The Communists are behaving as if the French had lost all critical sense."

It is arguable that the Communists are intoxicated by their own fervour, and that their propaganda results from inability to enter into the minds of other people. More probably, I suggest, the policy is deliberate. Their present purpose is not to win sympathisers but to reinforce the zeal of the elect. It may even be that, while alienating voters, they are recruiting some Party members. This explanation would accord with the widely held opinion that what the Kremlin now wants in France is not a dictatorship of the proletariat but a democracy with a Communist Party strong enough to bring pressure on the Government when Russian interests are concerned.

So far, the Government has done remarkably well. But if during the next six months it lacks the boldness and competence needed to provide the material necessities—food, fuel, transport, employment—general discontent will inevitably restore the now declining prestige of the Communists. Some intelligent non-Communists already fear that nothing short of Communism can effect the political and social revolution that is necessary. On the other hand, France cannot afford (to put it merely in terms of population) the liquidation of the bourgeoisie and the kulaks: such a purge would kill the already wasted and anæmic patient. I conclude that the likelihood of a Communist France is extremely slight.

One comment more upon this thorny point. Whatever the orthodoxy of the Communist leaders, I doubt whether the younger members of the Party, whose patriotism has been heroic, will remain content to take their orders from abroad. Their passion is to build a happy and powerful France, and they may think themselves better qualified than any Russian to judge how this aim is to be achieved, all the more so because few Russians know anything of France except by hearsay. Any such tendency would, of course, be denounced as Trotskyist, and the result might be a schism. But I cannot doubt that the future of the Communists in France depends chiefly upon whether they become nationalist in fact as well as in language. So long as they are content to follow the U.S.S.R., there will be no important increase in their numbers; and correspondingly the more their numbers increase, the stronger will be the demand among them for a policy that is, in the first place, French.

I have devoted so much space to the Communists because they are the most discussed party as well as the most articulate and the most disciplined. The other Resistance Groups control a majority of the Paris newspapers, erstwhile clandestine sheets which have substituted themselves for the old and venal press. (In one respect the French press is now superior to ours: no paper is at the orders of a rich proprietor.) How far these Resistance journals represent large sections of the electorate is uncertain. Hitherto they have been conspicuous more for the excellence of their intentions than for any very definite and practical policy. And this brings us to a crucial fact of which the French are grimly conscious: heroism is not synonymous with competence. The leader of a *maquis* is not necessarily a good administrator, or the *saboteur* a good factory manager, or the brave editor a good editor. The journalists of pre-war Paris collaborated perhaps more generally than any other class. (It must be said that most of them had no alternative means of earning their living.) Of their successors, all morally admirable, only one, Camus, is equally outstanding as a publicist. (His editorials in his paper, *Combat*, are as thoughtful and well written as those in the *Figaro*.) Evidently, with only two pages at their disposal, editors and journalists have an exacting task. But the more acute the material difficulties, the greater the competence required to cope with them. Some existing newspapers do not deserve to survive, and the Communists justly complain that the paper ration is not modified each month in proportion to the public demand for each journal. Another complaint is that an evening paper has been launched without the consent of the Press Federation; this is *Paris-Presse*, edited by Philippe Barrès, a Governmental organ, which, most mistakenly, as I think, has been modelled in its typography and lay-out on the old and disgraceful *Paris-Soir*. A Governmental morning paper is also promised. The weeklies include *Les Lettres Françaises* and *Carrefour*, the former predominantly Communist, and both of them full of interest, æsthetic as well as political; also *La Bataille*, which is the old *Marseillaise* from London and Algiers. There are as yet no monthly reviews, which is specially regrettable, because these have been a signal glory of the French tradition.

To conclude, a word on the Assembly, which has much the same merits and defects as the press. The members are eminently serious, public-spirited and assiduous; they even listen to one another's speeches. They represent what has shown itself the most estimable section of the French, but a section and little more. Many of them would not have condescended to enter the muddy business of pre-war politics, but are anxious to serve as deputies in the Chamber of a purified Republic. Will they appeal to the electors in three or four integrated groups? And will the Chamber retain the character, amateurish, if you like, but incorruptible, of the Assembly? Final and most disquieting uncertainty: can the drastic changes necessary to reconstruct the French policy be effected without an authoritarian Government?

RAYMOND MORTIMER

A LONDON DIARY

The following is an extract from a letter by a British officer now serving in Greece.

All night long I have been hearing, and all the morning watching, the "insignificant minority of extremists" streaming down from the villages to demonstrate for freedom. These people are not the Partisans. They are whole families in their carts or on foot, old and young, with grandparents, children and animals, proudly bearing banners and the flags of all nations and all parties (except Royalist) and even crucifixes; and the village priests who know the lives and minds of their people are there on the people's side, proudly marching with them behind the E.A.M. banners. There must be no one except a few very old and very ill left in the villages to-day. Although it is a serious demonstration it is also to them something of a fiesta, and they are going with smiling faces.

There are also the disciplined bands of young men as yet unarmed and some armed E.L.A.S. and E.A.M. Groups, but they will not be there for the most part because they are consolidating their positions and looking to their supplies of food, ammunition and fuel, and their best troops have already left to reinforce the Athens area.

In this area we have coloured troops ready to restore "law and order," but unless the British forces bring anti-popular, government troops up here, there can be no civil war, for the Royalists, Fascists and Conservatives are in an extreme minority and furthermore are unarmed.

Colonels and majors are puffing about saying that they'll teach these "Bolsheviks" a lesson and meanwhile are prepared to support the ex-Quislings and Fascists and Cairoists now returned. I'm glad to say that a large number of troops don't feel the same, and are pretty fed up with the whole set up. A certain R.A.F. Squadron held a solemn ceremony yesterday at which they interred the remains of the Atlantic Charter with full Military Honours.

I understand now that they are going to starve Athens into surrender, until it is prepared to accept the rule of the overfed. The poor devils who have suffered and want to fight will be subordinated to these rats if they have their way—*but they won't*, though thousands more have to die. Life will assert itself.

* * *

R.A.F. bombers or rocket-firing Typhoons appear to have silenced since last Saturday the "Voice of Free Greece" emanating from E.A.M.'s radio transmitter near Athens. I should be more inclined to deplore this ruthless extension of British censorship if the E.A.M. propagandists, during their few days' life on the air, had shown a greater sense of proportion and had not broadcast with such complete irresponsibility stories of British "atrocities" which nobody would believe. Extravagances of that sort were more likely to harm than help the E.A.M. cause. But, crudities apart, the broadcasts made one clear impression on my mind: the employment by us of Indian troops (usually described by E.A.M. radio as "Arabs") produced violent reactions from the Greeks. Stirred by memories of old struggles between Cross and Crescent in the Balkans, they regarded our employment of these soldiers in Athens as the ultimate betrayal of "Civilisation." A good thing, it is said, that the British were not about the place at the battle of Salamis.

* * *

If to die nobly is the chief part of excellence, to us out of all men fortune gave this lot; for hastening to set a crown of freedom on Hellas, we lie possessed of praise that grows not old.

Simonides (trans. Mackail) *On the Athenian Dead at Plataea.*

* * *

I have recently talked with several friends who have been in close touch with events in Belgium. Two of them, eye-witnesses of the shooting affair in Brussels were outraged by Mr. Churchill's speech which they said, completely misrepresented events. There was never, they said, any threat of revolution. This account squares with the results of the investigation made on the spot by Mr. Solon of the *News Chronicle*. He reported that the lorry loads of armed men (who constituted a *putsch* in Mr. Churchill's mind) were on their way to deliver up their rifles in Brussels where they could receive payment for them. They actually gave them up voluntarily to the Belgian police. Mr. Churchill was questioned on this in the House of Commons. He admitted that he had been wrong in saying that these volunteers had been disarmed by British troops. The impression produced by Mr. Churchill's angry answers was that he was learning the facts for the first time. Someone is priming the Premier with anti-Red dope.

* * *

The news from China is rather more cheerful. It is too soon yet to say whether the Japanese have been decisively halted in their drive from Liuchow towards Kweiyang and Kunming, but that they have paused is clear. Significantly, the Chinese troops which have interposed themselves so opportunely have come from the army amounting to some half a million men who have so long been immobilised in the North in cutting off the Border armies from the rest of China. The Americans have long been asking for an agreement between Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists who command the Border armies and this move suggests that their advice has not been unheeded. There are also rumours, not yet confirmed, that Chou En-Lai, the Chinese Communist leader who has been living in Chungking, is to join the Chungking Government. That would be a big step forward towards a united China. That the liberalising process in Chungking is real is made clear enough by the emergence of T. V. Soong. As Acting-President of the Executive Council he will exercise real influence and, in home affairs, have some of the functions of Prime Minister. I have heard no one express dissatisfaction that H. H. Kung and his family seem to have taken up permanent residence in the United States.

* * *

The sort of man who is most easily a success in England gives a first powerful impression of reserve and even of stupidity, and is then gradually discovered to be a highly competent person holding down an important job. An impression of cleverness is hard to live down. This thought occurred to me when I met Philip Guedalla, as I often did, on the station platform or in the train, usually holding forth with great brilliance about this and that. He was one of a group of exceptionally able Balliol men before the last war, and he seemed destined, when he went to the Bar and into politics, for the highest positions of Liberal leadership. That he left politics was no doubt mainly due to the historic collapse of the Liberal Party; instead he made quite a success of popular history. But Guedalla, it seemed to me, was always haunted by memories of the great days at Oxford when he was President of the Union and made a reputation as a wit which in our day has perhaps only been surpassed by that of Father Ronald Knox. I am sure there are readers who cherish in their repertoire many of the epigrams that Guedalla would trot out in an after-dinner speech, or even in private conversation. I have an imperfect recollection of a remark about Galsworthy as a man who "could not see a fly without thinking of the cruel, cruel amber" and I cherish as one of the wittiest, if not the soundest, pieces of literary criticism, his epigram about Henry James. He said, "There are three Jameses: James the First, James the Second, and the Old Pretender."

* * *

Very sensibly, the Cabinet has seen that the original proposal to give servicemen a proxy vote in the next General Election has fallen flat. In nearly all the many letters I have had on this question from men and women serving overseas, two points recur. The proxy system is unpopular. It seems to amount to partial disfranchisement and my correspondents say that there is a disturbing amount of apathy and confusion about the purpose or utility of nominating proxies at all. Those who keep in fairly close touch with politics ask why it has been impossible to organise postal voting as the American Army did for the November elections. The Government has now appointed Sir John Anderson as Chairman of a special committee to look into this problem. Even if it proves impossible to send ballot papers to every remote outpost, the principle of direct voting should be established and soldiers automatically placed on the electoral register in the same way as civilians. I should say, however, that one of the most urgent jobs, besides ensuring every soldier has a vote, is to give them a fair chance to make up their minds about the issues at stake. And that means something more than stepping up the supply of educational materials and shipping parties of M.P.s off to the war fronts. We need a much more liberal interpretation of the King's Regulations which govern political activity by soldiers. As things are, a man in the Army who urges one of his pals to vote for a particular party runs the risk of summary punishment. Strictly applied—as in Cairo—this prohibits any honest discussion.

* * *

"London is a queer town," writes a friend who then goes on to relate the following most un-English incident that occurred this week. "Last night I lay in bed, and meditated with the gloom of flu on the battle ground outside my window. A big shelter entombed early in the 1940 Blitz; a bus shattered by a tip-and-run raider; a series of conflagrations; a recent explosion which was accountable for the fog wreathing through cotton salvage windows to settle cold upon my cheek. And now automatic drilling at eleven at night; the bomb must have damaged the pipes, I supposed. I might well meditate, since there was no hope of sleep. At last the drilling left off, and I heard the workmen laugh and gather their tools together. Then astonishingly, they began to sing carols. 'Quiet night, holy night'!—they were singing beautifully, in three parts. Their timing and harmony were perfect. All the voices were true and sweet, and I thought professionally trained. Could they be Pioneers, I wondered, working at bomb-damage together? They must have been ending their shifts of heavy work with sessions of song for a long time. They finished 'O come all ye faithful,' and went away to the strain of 'God rest ye, merry gentlemen'. Silence fell on the battered street."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to C. Evans.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

We do not query Mr. Laski's right to speak to the Labour Party Conference in his capacity as Vice-President. We do question his right to use the occasion to propagate out-and-out Socialism.

It was a Labour Party Conference, not a Socialist one.—Editorial note to letter in *Hull Daily Mail*.

And it was also Beethoven at his most celestial quality, the suggestion of a soul sliding through liquid bliss to have caught which was one of the glories of Disney's "Fantasia."—*Daily Express*.

Sir William Allen, D.L., M.P., said that he welcomed the Northern Government's White Paper on education. He regretted, however, that teachers were to have liberty of conscience with regard to religious instruction in elementary schools.—Report in *Belfast News*.

"We could feel cynical, almost hostile, about the reaction to liberation in Greece, Belgium and other countries, but we must make allowance for the anguish of mind that prompts the demonstrations."—*Bournemouth Daily Echo*.

CUL-DE-SAC

THE publication of the fine Greater London Plan which Professor Abercrombie has worked out for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning is a significant event. The plan deals with one-fourth of our population and makes proposals affecting five counties. That is to say, it is a regional plan on a very large scale. It embodies suggestions for the gradual rearrangement of industries and population within an area under direction—a programme hitherto undreamed of as a practical proposition for any part of Britain. There is still no sign of a supreme authority to make an outline and co-ordinating plan for the country, nor of a policy or philosophy of living which could inspire such an authority; but at least two important conceptions have been reached—people's minds are becoming accustomed to the idea that *laisser-faire* in the location of industry and the provision of homes is intolerable and must end; and human, family, and social considerations for the first time play a really important part in our ideas of new towns and domestic building. The principle of Neighbourhood Planning is now so generally accepted that the phrase has become a commonplace. Gone, we feel, are the bad old days typified in Dagenham and Beacontree, originally planned (for the relief of overcrowded London) as 25,000 cottages, with little or no industry, and few shops; partly built without the provision of schools, public halls, churches or other meeting places, with disgracefully inadequate transport, and no consideration for the value of agricultural land. Much of our planning to-day is excellent. Our ablest planners know that people and their work should not be separated; purely dormitory towns and suburbs are rejected. Communications and transport problems are carefully thought out. Lower densities than were considered possible twenty-five years ago are generally adopted; public open spaces and provision for recreation and sport and for school playing-fields are a matter of course. A magnificent community centre, with suggestions for educational and cultural developments of all kinds, dominates the layout. In theory, but in theory only, we have learnt that the whole nation suffers from rigid segregation of the population according to income, and the shining plans and models portray mixed residential development with architecturally harmonised flats and houses in great variety.

Again in theory only, the Government has blessed the conclusions of the Barlow Royal Commission on the dispersal of industry—the first essential to wise planning. At present about half our population lives in five or six crowded areas. The first evacuation did something to open the eyes of a country which has prospered on its industry to the conditions in which large numbers of its industrial workers live, and the majority of our people have said with sincerity, "we do not intend that this state of things shall continue." The present time is peculiarly favourable for a reversal of discredited policies. Considerable areas in some of our large towns have to be rebuilt. Decisions have to be made with regard to the retention or removal of war factories sited in country districts, and as to the location of factories which are to supply civilian goods. The "redundant" war-workers are even now cynically prophesying their future on the scrap heaps of "Special Areas." More important even than these urgencies is the fact that young people are psychologically ready to leave crowded cities. The vast majority of young parents in this country want a house and garden, work just round the corner, shops, schools for their children, amusements and town life, *and* access to open country. If they cannot have all these desiderata, then they want as many of them as they can achieve.

In the inter-war period revolt against life in mean streets and shared houses was manifest in wave after wave of suburban building: the many thousands who were left behind, generally the poorest, had their first experience of life in country towns and villages when the war came. The reasons for their speedy return were only too natural—home-sickness, the desire for the freedom of one's own place, the feeling of being not wanted, the bleak unfamiliarity of strange districts. Nevertheless, from all this and from visits to different parts of the country in successive crises, has emerged a population of young mothers with a very different outlook from that of six years ago. A report from the Women's Advisory Housing Council estimates that about 52 per cent. of the younger women want to live in a suburb or small town, 30 per cent. prefer the country, and only 17 per cent. desire to live in a city.

There is no indication that our legislators are aiming at a plan for the dispersal of industry and population, or that the larger local authorities look forward to a diminution in the number of their ratepayers. The Minister of Reconstruction in the Lords' debate on the Control of Land Use on September 27th of this year was revealing. He said, in effect, that the Government was aware of all the problems and the danger of a recurrence of Special Areas, that the haphazard growth of our towns and encroachment on good agricultural land must not continue, but that it would be a bad idea to inflict a master plan on the country; it would be better if the local authorities evolved their plans with a neighbourly interest in one another. And, all said and done, a Coalition Government was a compromise Government, and produced compromises.

Meanwhile, what is the position of the local authorities? Glasgow has 68,000 families on the waiting-list for Council houses and flats. Its new buildings reach a high standard of construction, floor-space, and design, but its slums are notorious. The task of Glasgow with its 1,250,000 population is immense, and it is being tackled with energy and ability. It is not part of a scheme for Scotland, nor has agreement been reached with the Clyde Bank Regional Committee: Glasgow cannot wait. Leeds has 44,000 condemned houses, and is proceeding with plans for a fine housing scheme to cover 66 acres within its area. All our great towns are making or have completed plans to deal with their overcrowded population and slum areas: they are not dealing with the problem on the principles of dispersal. The same difficulties arise in slightly less acute form in non-industrial towns. Where is Brighton to build? On the allotments which constitute about the only remaining open downland space within the town boundary?

And what of the short term policy? "Phoenix" houses can hardly be said to have arisen from the ashes of Portals, but we are told that they will arise from the Portal plan, and that Phoenix, Portal, or some similar temporary houses will be supplied to local authorities. The Ministry suggests siting for at least one hundred in a group. Bungalows have a different floor area from permanent houses, and Manchester led the way in protesting that the idea of erecting Portals on sites designed for permanent housing was "most unfortunate." The Ministry agreed to consider Manchester's counter proposals. The idea of filling up public parks with groups of Phœnixes in hundreds is also unfortunate! The alternatives, then, are land needed for other purposes than housing (but how soon will it be needed?) or open country beyond the area scheduled for the permanent houses. The conclusion is that there is nowhere for the Phoenix-Portal.

The prospect for the next ten or twenty years seems to be: first, piecemeal planning, some of it no doubt good; but unless more local authorities reveal that "neighbourly interest" which Lord Woolton recommends, most of it will be on a very small scale; secondly, houses—for houses the nation is determined to have—houses good, bad and indifferent, temporary and permanent, brick houses, taking 2,000 man hours to erect, and factory houses taking 900 man hours, flats, bungalows and huts; thirdly, perhaps, as time goes on, some interesting modern industrial and commercial buildings, and some fine community centres, often put up by public subscription as War Memorials.

Neither Professor Abercrombie's regional plan for London, nor any other large-scale plan made with vision appears to have the slightest chance of coming to life. We are told that we must recover our export trade—which seems usually to mean giving up the idea of a balanced economy. We are apparently going to accept and intensify town life on the pre-war plan. We have refused to nationalise land, or even to introduce new legislation to deal with land compensation, and it seems likely that the only property owners who are to suffer financial loss as a result of the war are those whose property has been destroyed by enemy action. Every week land is being purchased for the community at prices which will to some extent penalise taxpayers and ratepayers. Local authorities are to make their own plans with little Exchequer assistance except in dealing with blitzed and slum areas. No Bill to restrict, regulate, or direct the movements of industry, or the establishment of new industries, has been announced. Many decisions which are likely to be disastrous for the future of Planning will be taken in the next year, and if Labour comes into power its task will be difficult indeed. Has the Labour Party—or any other party—a policy for Housing? A policy for Housing involves a policy for industry and agriculture, a national planning policy, depending in its turn on an international policy, and on decisions such as, for instance, the allocation of materials and labour between armaments and houses. If there is no such policy, and no Government with the courage to make one, the alternative is congestion, slums, ugliness, transport confusion, derelict factories, unemployment, ill-health, poverty and chaos.

IRENE I. BARCLAY.

BACKGROUND TO TRAGEDY

I RETURN to England after an absence of more than a year, much of which was spent in the Near East, to find general surprise that Churchill's Greek diplomacy should so quickly have borne such bitter, such distasteful fruit. Anyone with half an eye who was in Egypt or Syria last spring could have foreseen to-day's terrible events; and might, if circumstances had been different, have done something to prevent them.

Alas, newspaper correspondents in Cairo with sufficient knowledge to draw attention to the weaknesses inherent in Government policy are gagged by as complicated and improper a censorship as any that this war has to show. Not only is that censorship—which was originally imposed purely for reasons of military security—often stretched to cover matters that are political in content, but the British Embassy to the King of the Hellenes is itself permitted to censor all despatches which deal with Greece. This will be denied by the authorities, but is a fact in so far as the appointed censorship personnel "seek guidance" from that Embassy, and accept it. Beyond this lies the personal censorship of the Resident Minister of State, who only last May, after consultation with London (still another censorship!) rejected a claim by correspondents in Cairo that they should be permitted to show whither Churchill was leading us. This is not all. The Egyptian Government, which to-day in all external matters enjoys only a nominal sovereignty, exercises a censorship on all cables leaving the country; and the British Ambassador to Cairo enjoys similar rights. Even the Cairo branch of the Ministry of Information is not without either influence or sin in this regard.

We have, then, in Cairo a barrier of several different censorships between the correspondent and the public; and we may take it as certain that that barrier exists to-day for those correspondents who are trying to write the truth from Athens.

I do not pretend that I or any other correspondent could have done anything to impede

the Gadarene rush of Churchill down the slope of "Metternichism," to use a disgusting word, but it is possible that had enlightenment been given by us on certain points, the House of Commons might have done something to divert or check the Prime Minister.

Unfortunately all my detailed papers of that time were destroyed in an aeroplane accident, so I can but recall here a few of the points which were censored at the time. To these I have added, where necessary, comments.

1. Immediately after the Lebanon Conference it was obvious that the Papandreou Government could not last a month without the "moral" backing of the British Government, and could not hope to enter Greece without its physical backing.

2. Papandreou himself stated privately that unless he could get what he obviously could not get—the full co-operation of E.A.M.—he would ask the British Government to reverse what had been their policy and to send British troops into Greece "to keep order."

This is a cardinal point. I do not know when the policy was reversed, but certainly up to the end of May there was no intention of sending more than a militarily organised relief unit under General Holmes into Greece. Their instructions were to do no more than hand over supplies to whatever Greek authorities they might find there. At a conference with General Holmes I raised the point myself that if the Papandreou Government was to go back, the relief unit would be totally inadequate to "keep order," and would probably find no Greek authorities to whom to deliver their supplies.

It follows, I think, that the later decision to send combat troops into Greece was taken not in order to "liberate" the country but to preserve in power a Government which had taken an oath of loyalty to the King.

3. The conduct of the King himself, and the means by which, either by design or because of a constitutional inability to think quickly (if anything about him can be said to be constitutional) he precipitated the crisis which led Leeper to choose Papandreou—all this was a barred subject. Having chosen him Leeper decided to support him to the bitter end. I am sorry in this connection to contradict Lord Vansittart, who claims that professional diplomats do no more than execute the policies of H.M.G., and that to criticise them is to break their hearts. Papandreou was Leeper's choice and "sold" by him to H.M.G.

It is nonsense, however, to say that Leeper is intentionally the "evil genius of Greece": the truth is that (I speak now of last spring) he was a sick and tired man; and in my opinion unfit physically to pursue with care and diligence the implications of his policy before he had irrevocably committed himself to it. My impression at the time was that he was sick and tired—as who in Cairo was not?—of the whole Greek question, and was determined to achieve what is always impossible in such circumstances as those with which he had to deal—a compromise.

Had we, who were then in Cairo, been allowed to make further observations, there might not to-day be so many people who look on the miserable conflict as one between angels and devils. It is as idiotic to say that the majority of E.L.A.S. is Communist as that the majority of E.D.E.S. is royalist. If it were not for Churchill the King would no longer be an object of contention; as long ago as last spring he had passed out of the realm of things that matter; and even then the conflict was between a new and an old order, between hope, sometimes undisciplined and brutal, and reaction with all that it meant in privilege and selfishness. Those who stood for hope sometimes alienated their friends. It was impossible, for instance, to sympathise with the April mutiny in the Greek Army, even though the reasons for it were obvious. It was not the first mutiny; and all of them broke out only at times when the troops were under orders to sail for a theatre of war. When you live long with soldiers and know them it is not so easy to dismiss the expedient as of no more than usual validity when compared with the moral principles involved; and if your friends are to be killed because an integral part of the army groups to which they belong will not fight, for reasons which you fully understand and with which normally you sympathise, you must withhold your good will. It was expedient that the Greek troops should go to Italy; and, in truth, that is what mattered. At least that is how I felt. The tragedy is that the whole question need never have arisen if Churchill had understood the implications of this war. If he had done so it might never have been necessary—as I am convinced it was—to interrupt the clandestine supply of British arms to Greek guerrillas in, I think, the early part of this year. If they had not been haunted by the spectre of a returning crowned reaction they would not have felt it so necessary to divert their enmity from the Germans and to turn it against their political opponents at home. By the former their lives were threatened, but by the latter their children's lives were threatened as well.

What seems to me important is not to deny or ignore facts which smear the cause in which decent men believe, but to understand why they occur. So far as Greece is concerned, you can find the answer by walking down Whitehall and taking the first turning to the right.

PHILIP JORDAN

BOOTS

DRIVING a taxi in London isn't funny. It's a grim business and, at times, very strange. This morning, in the space of an hour, I saw a French soldier weeping happily at his sudden recall to French territory, a sergeant on his way to a court-martial, a mother hugging a boy due for the coal-mine and an American Negro private without boots or socks. The Negro's attitude hit me hardest, because of his stubborn refusal to accept his dilemma with any degree of concern.

"Drive me to a shoe," he yelled at me from the inside of the cab. I nodded solemnly and made for the first shop I saw. With a diffident composure he trod warily on the pavement and began fumbling through his uniform.

"Ninepence," I said, with a glance at the small throng of onlookers, who gazed at my fare with a mixture of surprise and concern. The American grunted and made a further move through the same pockets.

"Lost your boots?" I said brightly.

"Yep," said the American, digging his hands awkwardly across his blouse.

"And your socks?"

"Yep."

"Money, too?"

"Yep."

"Fare's ninepence," I suggested. The American kept silent.

"Out all night?" I asked.

My fare nodded, and turned an indifferent stare toward the anxious onlookers.

"A dame hooked you?" I asked sympathetically.

"Yep," he answered, digging deep into his trousers.

"And no dough?" I said.

"Yep, no dough," he replied.

"Then you can't buy boots," I said. He released his hand from the folds of his blouse and thoughtfully stroked his chin. For a short while he said nothing, and I watched his face go into a deep effort of meditation. "Guess you're right, buddy," he said. "Guess nobody'll give you boots jest because a guy's got his feet bare," and he deposited a set of languid toes on to the side of my cab.

"Any pals?" I suggested hopefully.

"Nope," he said.

"No friends at all?" I asked.

"Yep, plenty friends," said the American.

"Then where are they?" I asked.

"Back at base," he said.

The crowd had now thickened across the broad sidewalk, and the Negro soldier appeared entirely unabashed at the stir he had caused. In my pocket I had some money, and my rent was due that day, and I could ill afford parting with the cash I possessed. "Look here, buddy . . ." I began, and got no farther.

I looked at the policeman, and he looked at me. "Trouble?" he asked.

"No trouble," I said.

The policeman gazed down at the American's toes. "No boots?" he asked.

"No boots," said the Yank.

The policeman looked pensively at the crowd and then back at me. "Been paid—?" he asked.

"Not yet," I replied.

"No money?" he asked.

"No money," I nodded. The policeman paused thoughtfully at the call for decision. Meanwhile, the Negro, seeing that the centre of attraction had shifted temporarily, climbed back into the cab and sat watching the proceedings with a deep interest. Part of the crowd began to melt, and a few jostled closer for a better view. "I suppose he'll have to get boots somewhere?" said the policeman.

"Guess I'd better," said the American from behind. "Look here," I said, "let me take him somewhere I know and I'll get him fixed up."

Let me record now that in all my travels I had met worse policemen than the one now present. I looked at him again and he looked at me back. Then he looked at the crowd, and then again at me. Maybe he winked. I wouldn't know. Everything was so silly, and everywhere people, and me with trouble, and a fare in my taxi with bare feet. Maybe that's why I can't remember. Everything got mixed up, and I started my engine and drove quickly down the street. My American friend peered calmly through the narrow aperture of the inside window. "What's the trouble?" he asked.

"You," I replied.

"Can't a guy lose his boots?" he said.

"No," I replied, "not here."

"Hurts nobody, I guess," said the American.

"No, nobody hurt," I replied.

"Then what's bawlin'?" he asked.

"Your feet," I said. "It's creating a public nuisance."

My fare gazed sadly into space. "Gee," he said. "It's kinda queer."

"Yes," I replied. "It is kinda queer."

"Yeh, I guess so," he said.

"I guess so, too," I answered. Halfway up Oxford Street I stopped outside a large shoe store. "Look," I said, "boots."

"Yep," said my fare.

"Millions of them," I said.

"Yep," from behind.

"And no money," I said.

"That's right," he replied.

"And no coupons," I said.

"Yep," said the American, "no coupons."

"Then no boots," I said.

"Guess not," he replied.

"We'll have to do something," I said.

"We sure will," he said.

"Then you think of something," I said.

"Ah sure don't know," said the Yank with a shake of his head.

I drove to the cabmen's shelter in Leicester Square. It was still early, and two drivers there were engrossed in a heated argument. One wanted dinner, and the other could smell kippers.

"Listen, fellows," I said, "I'm in trouble."

"Trouble?" they both echoed.

"Yes, trouble," I said.

I look at Sam, who wanted kippers. "Sam," I said, "I gotta find a pair of boots."

"Boots?" asked Sam.

"Yes, boots," I said, "I gotta find a pair quick."

"Quick?" Sam said.

"Yes, quick," I said.

"Why quick?" asked Sam.

I explained. ". . . and if I turn him out the cops'll get him."

Sam went into deep thought. "No coupons?" asked Sam.

"No coupons," I replied. Sam thought again. "Then no boots," he said.

Outside, the American gazed placidly out of the cab. I felt sorry for his predicament, but more angry at his placidity. Probably his first day in London, I thought, and possibly his last, unless he got boots and I the return of my cab. "Hi, buddy," I shouted, "come in here."

Buddy stirred himself and entered the shelter. "Look here," I said, "you want boots?"

"Yeh," he replied, "boots."

"You MUST have boots?" I asked.

"MUST have boots," he replied.

"Then wait here," I said, "and I'll get you boots."

I was away almost an hour, and when I returned I had a new pair of boots under my arm. "Whose coupons?" Sam asked.

"Mine," I said.

"Whose money?" asked Sam.

"Landlord's," I replied.

"Dem boots no good," said the Negro.

"No good?" I asked.

"Yeh, no good," he said.

"Why no good?" I said.

"Dem black boots," said the American.

"But dem's brown," I said, pointing to the ones I wore.

"They sure am," he said, "they sure am," and for the first time his face moved and his lips went into a wide grin.

That evening the man with the stubby pencil called for his rent. "No money," I said.

"No money?" asked the man.

"That's right," I said, "no money."

"Trouble?" he asked.

"No trouble," I replied.

"And no rent?" he said.

"No rent," I nodded.

"P'rhaps to-morrow?" he asked.

"P'rhaps," I said.

MAURICE LEVINSON

THE MOVIES

"L'Homme qui Cherche La Verite," at Studio One

The new film showing at Studio One is described as being "in the great tradition of Molière"; to that one might add the lesser tradition of innumerable plot-adepts who have found comedy in the situation of a man either determining to tell the truth himself or finding out the truth about those who surround him. *L'Homme qui Cherche la Verité* hovers between the two, at some moments exploiting the intrigue, at others assuming the larger outlines of satire. A rich elderly banker (Raimu) is the Honest Man betrayed: agreeable paradox in these times! He begins to doubt the fidelity of his mistress; suspicions crowd in at his ear from all sides, and he decides to test them—by shamming deaf. Poor M. Vernet, so generous, so friendly, and now as deaf as a post. Heads are shaken commiseratingly behind his back. But the tune quickly changes. "Take that, you old bastard!" growls the butler as he ladles half-cooked spaghetti on to his master's plate. His sister intercepts a client in order to rake off ten per cent. from a deal. His brother-in-law cheats him at cards, and makes love to young girls in cafés. His nephew, whom he has treated as a son, goes to bed with the mistress from whom all these unnerving suspicions have begun. The spectacle of Raimu, reading a book on medicine, while round him his dependants openly bicker and accuse one another, with smiles on their faces, is admirably harsh and inspiring. "Death!" shouts the aggrieved banker, suddenly flinging down the book, "there is nothing here that doesn't point to death!" Later, with a Timon-like grandeur, he accuses them, one by one, and dismisses them from his life. Only his dog remains, the one honest friend. An exception is made at the last moment for the mistress, who has had pangs of conscience. "When a woman is too much alone . . ." This is the ending, really, of a much more trivial tale. And is the honest banker himself without blemish? How did he get on so well? Why do his relatives rend him like wolves? Isn't this the result of over-tipping, over-paying servants, unloading riches too complacently? One has an affection for the soft Caesar, but satire in the grand manner shouldn't leave loop-holes for sentiment. However, two-thirds of *L'Homme qui Cherche la Verité* is comedy of a high order.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Peter Pan," at the Stoll

"This is *much* better than last time!" Thus a five-year-old critic, better qualified than oneself to judge, since one has missed last year's production. Half the interest of going to a children's play lies in listening to the comments of the audience. How much, we wonder, of the fantasy and illusion gets across to the practical eyes of children? "Cardboard shields," said a small neighbour scornfully when the braves came on. "*And* cardboard trees!" But there were no raptures on the flying, which seemed competently and gracefully managed. Miss Frances Day plays Peter with lightness and charm. The Captain, Mr. Walter Fitzgerald, has a rolling resonant voice ("r-r-rich, damp, cake!") and a fine swagger round the deck. Looking back to one's own childhood one remembers a horrifying lurch of the heart on catching sight of the iron hook, but this is such a nicely chromium-plated one that the menace is missing. Miss Angela Wyndham Lewis is Wendy, by whose emotional doubts and demands children are, unlike the grown-ups, unembarrassed. She achieves her most moving moment in floating, wounded, to the ground in the Never, Never, Never, Land. It does not do to complain in wartime, but need the poor child's clothes be quite so hard on the eye? For the rest, Italia Conti's pupils plainly enjoy romping on the stage. The emerald green crocodile is a joy.

USELESS AND INACCEPTABLE GIFTS

Now Christmastide comes round once more,
With all its festival *décor*,
The season is appropriate for
Gifts.

Though international good will
And peace are (relatively) nil,
They show the Yuletide spirit still,
Seasonable gifts.

Whitehall a choice of gifts supplies
For Britons, and the small Allies;
Recipients should not scrutinise
Original and useful gifts.

To bring the home front joy and cheer,
White Papers (slightly soiled) appear,
With wishes hopeful and sincere,
Reasonable and inexpensive gifts.

But cheap gift tokens, strange to say,
And bogus Charters on display,
Are even hard to give away
As acceptable or pleasing gifts.

The Poles receive new frontier maps
Where acquisitions balance gaps,
Which Poles do not regard perhaps,
As suitable and appropriate gifts.

The gifts for Greece, unwrapped too soon,
Intended as a royal boon,
Are not considered opportune
Welcome or desirable gifts.

The gifts for Italy designed
Dispatched with greetings firm but kind,
The anti-Fascists do not find
Timely or necessary gifts.

The gifts in Whitehall most admired,
By seasonable thoughts inspired,
Are definitely not desired,
Unattractive, inacceptable, useless, unwelcome,
inappropriate and utterly superfluous gifts.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

PSYCHOLOGY OF RESISTANCE

SIR,—The attitude of even liberal-minded Englishmen to the E.L.A.S. troops, which suggests that they are no more than young hooligans with tommy guns, seems to be founded on a complete failure to appreciate the normal psychologic reactions of people who have lived under a repressive occupational regime.

Young men do not become hooligans when they get a tommy gun any more than hooligans become friends of democracy when the tommy gun is taken away from them, but young men and women become astonishingly intransigent when they have lived in a concentration camp or on sufferance in exile, and a country under military occupation reproduces many of the conditions of a concentration camp.

It is in fact intransigence and not extremism that is characteristic of liberation movements. The retention of their weapons which have become a symbol of personal honour, is only one of the many matters about which E.L.A.S., Maquis or White Army soldiers are intransigent.

When the freedom to exchange ideas is curtailed and social criteria are weakened or have disappeared, each individual formulates his own conception of the future social structure. Such conceptions differ widely even when they share a common label, such as E.A.M. or Communism. In the absence of discussion and criticism there is a tendency for each individual to believe in the essential rightness of his own views and in their general acceptance by not only those who share the label but by the rest of the population which has failed to challenge them. The herd instinct is disintegrated.

This state of mind, which is not extremism bred by hunger, but intransigence bred by repression of free discussion, can only be dealt with by the restoration of the lost freedom and the recognition in the meantime that it is a slightly morbid condition. The emotional symbolism of weapons will fade in time when the mind has been sufficiently exercised to resume its ascendancy over the emotions. To disarm partisans before that happens is as sensible as suddenly depriving an addict of access to his drug.

That there are risks involved in keeping guerrillas armed, and that, by English standards, security will be extremely bad, cannot be denied. The French have shown that military ardour can be canalised and, if not elected, at least representative institutions play the part of crucibles to scrappy and angular politics. It is not altogether improbable that the E.L.A.S. army would melt of its own accord if all the E.A.M. leaders were compelled to discuss in public an agreed programme of national reconstruction, and, as is more than likely, failed to reach agreement.

PROD

THE CHALLENGE TO GREECE

SIR,—As a Greek democrat, I am grateful to you for stressing in your issue of December 9th, 1944, what is the crux of the present problem in Greece. That is that the British are relying on an unpopular king to keep Greece within Britain's sphere of influence.

King George II of the Hellenes would serve his country best at this tragic juncture by making an open and unequivocal declaration that he will not return to Greece at the invitation of any Government *whatever its composition*, until after the will of the people has been established by a plebiscite held under the supervision of the Allied Nations. By this, he would allay the suspicions of the Greek people that he is plotting to bring back the dictatorship.

Greece can best be kept within Britain's sphere of influence by the affection of her people who have demonstrated without question the warmth of their affection for the British.

15, New Street, Bishopsgate.

E. H. ATHNASSOGLOU

THIRD PARTY JUDGMENT

SIR,—The most tragic aspect of the action we are taking in Greece is not the loss of many of our own brave men, not the inhumanity of continuing the sufferings in Greece, not even the shame of our having put the brake on the forces of progress in that un-

happy country; it is that we have set a bad example in not submitting the case to the arbitrament of collective responsibility, by calling in our allies and acting in co-operation with them. Thus, like the Russians in the case of the set-up in Poland and its frontiers, we have shown that we have no intention of practising the only precept by which war can be eradicated—that is, acceptance of international responsibility for threatened disturbance of the peace. If, as in the case of the seizure of Vilna by the Poles and Memel by the Lithuanians after the last war (without opposition from the all-powerful big three) the two most powerful victors in this war set the example of settling disputes by the force of might as they want, how can they ever hope to establish an international authority which will deserve any respect other than that derived from superior force? And what right have we to expect that superior force will always remain united and on our side? Thus our action in Greece has already cut at the roots of all hope of a lasting peace. There is now only one thing for each man to do: To seek out the best hide-out within reach for the next war, and start digging a 100-foot underground shelter.

The Grey House, LEONARD G. DOBBS
Whatlington, Battle.

WESTERN UNION

SIR,—The central issue in the proposal for a Western Union is this: Will it become a link or a clog in the chain of general international co-operation? As a scheme of military security it would be of little use; as a scheme of economic security it could achieve something for its members only if closely organised. And if closely organised it must implicitly be exclusive, giving its members preferences and privileges denied to outsiders; a very different matter from the regional devolution of a common activity contemplated in the Dumbarton Oaks draft.

That consequence is so inevitable that the mere discussion of the idea is causing reactions both east and west, in Russia and in America. Is that uneasiness among our chief and indispensable allies unfounded? One danger of such immature ideas is that they can give shelter to all sorts of people with all sorts of motives. Many of its advocates sincerely hope that by means of it they might stabilise economic and social life in Western Europe. But I have been profoundly disturbed to find among those who assiduously use this language a small group of German economists who, before the war, were working closely with the most notorious group of "appeasers," some of whom up to the very eve of war were go-betweens in financial and trade transactions with the Nazis. The old connections still seem to be active enough to give this German group many ways of spreading their ideas; and they do not hesitate to insist that a Western Union is also needed to save Western culture. With such tendencies being insinuated into its heart the Western Union idea, besides feeding isolationism in America and Russia, is almost sure to bring about again a bitter division in the public opinion and foreign policy of this country. OXONIAN

A REPUBLICAN'S FAITH

SIR,—I shall be grateful if you will do me the favour of publishing a plain statement of my republican faith. I have always regarded and written of monarchy as a profoundly corrupting influence upon our national life, imposing an intricate snobbishness upon our dominant classes, upon our religions, educational, military, naval and combatant services generally, burking the promotion of capable men and reserving power in the community entirely for the privileged supporters of our Hanoverian monarchy. I have pointed out that the "Dunciad" was the last despairing cry of a brighter England before our country was added to the galaxy of German monarchies which at that time, together with the doomed absolutism of France, overshadowed the world. The Hanoverian Dynasty which was imposed upon us turned out to be a particularly intractable family. It broke our natural connection with America by its already antiquated ideas of Kingship and subordinated the contribution of "God's Englishman" to human welfare, to the trivial dynastic interests of a family which, before the current century, talked always with a heavy German accent, and thought with an inflexible German mentality.

The religious, political, economic and social stranglehold upon free thought and speech in this country have always been so great that only a few people like Sir Charles Dilke and myself have been able to give this Republicanism free expression. He at the price of a bitter social ostracism led by Queen Victoria, and I because I was a popular story writer—and nobody in a world where everyone knows his place heeds what a popular writer has to say.

The Prince Consort used to read and appraise Martin Tupper, but after his conspicuously lamented death the widow lapsed into seclusion, egotistical diary writing and practical illiteracy. As this was realised English social life and writing began to take liberties. The Royal Family was not in society and its influence upon the intellectual life of the time faded altogether. From this the shock of the Edward VIII affair galvanized it and its supporters into the spasmodic reactionary activities they are displaying to-day. All the unteachable elderly, all the conservative elements in our intricate and confused national life are rallying for one last desperate defensive offensive against the civilised instincts of mankind. They stick at nothing; they seem resolved to provoke a social revolution and they have already gone far in the East, in Greece and elsewhere to make the English name stink as badly as the German in the judgment of ordinary men. That stink is on us all and as we realise our helplessness in the grip of our present Government we may pethaps be better able to understand the hopeless position of a rational German or Indian or Japanese in this world chaos.

I have been wanting to say this plainly for some time and I thank you warmly for giving me the opportunity to swear like this in your columns.

13 Hanover Terrace, H. G. WELLS

POPULATION

SIR,—An ordinary mortal only ventures with some trepidation into controversy with one who has achieved fame and fortune on the Brains Trust; it is hard to know when Dr. Joad writes how far he is deliberately trailing his coat.

Let me, therefore, start on the safe ground of fact. He is wrong in saying that "They (the Russians) are the only European people who are increasing." So also are the Rumanians, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, and in fact all the other nations of East and South Europe. This differential birthrate, as a recent League of Nations publication shows, is likely to have some severe political repercussions. They can only be avoided by the adoption of a European population policy, one part of which is to stabilise the numbers of the countries threatened with a deficiency of births. It is true that at some time the population problem may be of world dimensions; India, for instance, cannot go on indefinitely increasing by 50 millions every ten years. But a falling birthrate in Western Europe is not the solution; apart from other most important considerations the numbers do not balance.

We must assume that Dr. Joad is reverting to Brains Trust form when he suggests the present inadequate supply of houses, indoor sanitation, education, theatres, cinemas, streets, restaurants, telephone boxes, trains, can be satisfactorily adjusted by reducing the population of the country—a process requiring 20 or 30 years. With luck we should be able to rely on the Ministries of Reconstruction and Town and Country Planning to get to work more quickly than that!

Why, in fact, are we trying, and with us the Dominions and other equally threatened Western democracies, to alter the present demographic trends which threaten both the quality as well as the numbers of our citizens? In the first place we do so because we believe that with all our failings we have a contribution to make to human progress, and to the "international

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JONATHAN CAPE

system of collective security backed by force" which Dr. Joad advocates. Secondly, it is not just a matter of defending our existing populations because we believe they are the optimum size for our respective circumstances. This may or may not be the case. What is far more important to avoid is the slippery slope of declining numbers; (a) once that trend starts it is likely to continue with increasing momentum; (b) as it continues the gap between the actual birthrate and that needed for stabilisation automatically widens—that is to say, the social changes necessary become more drastic and thus more difficult to encompass; (c) compared with a stable population, one that is rising has to support an excess number of dependent children, while one that is falling has an excess number of dependent old people. When a country whose population has been declining decides to call a halt, it has the worst of both worlds; for a generation it has to face an undue number of dependants at both ends of the scale.

Unless we feel such miserable sinners that the world would be better without us altogether, the moment to tackle our population problem is now, before a decline actually has set in. The last thing we want to do is wait until our numbers have fallen to some so far unspecified figure. L. J. CADBURY

The Davids,
Northfield, Birmingham.

FORESTRY COMMISSION

SIR,—Surely one of the worst things about the Forestry Commission is its insistence on a class structure, out of date in the modern army. It is extremely hard for a forester to rise from the ranks and become a District Officer, since the latter is supposed to have a "University background." This is very discouraging for the foresters, but perhaps reflects the political beliefs of some of the originators of the thing.

Other things that are wrong: too little local initiative. In general, bad landlords (they have a good deal of agricultural land, with farm buildings). Above all, they are more interested in growing rows of trees than in their own workers; they ought to set an example in building decent houses with roads to them, before they even start planting. If they say they cannot afford to do the right thing, why shouldn't they go, as they well might, into the tree nursery business which would certainly pay? But of course it's the old song: you mustn't compete with the dear private trader!

State-owned forests democratically run might be a splendid thing; afforestation employs more men than sheep runs do—far more of course than the same area of deer forest. If forest industries were to be encouraged, still more could be employed, including women. But that would mean a different outlook in the Forestry Commission.

NAOMI MITCHISON

Campbeltown, Argyll.

LEGAL AID

SIR,—It is rather hasty of "Critic," after a few lines describing the expense of defending oneself against a prosecution, to say that "the case for a Public Defender seems unanswerable."

Presumably he uses the term "Public Defender" in the full sense of a public official who represents poor persons who are accused of a crime, as opposed to "assigned counsel" such as we provide for poor persons in this, and most other, countries. There is much to be said for such a system—it is strongly recommended by the National Association of Legal Aid Organisations, in America—but the points which "Critic" makes are no real argument in its favour.

His points are that you need to be almost destitute to get a certificate under the Poor Prisoners' Defence Act, and that far too few certificates are granted. The solutions are, first, to lay it down that certificates should be granted to any person whose means do not enable him to obtain competent assistance without legal aid; secondly, to give the power to grant certificates to the Clerk instead of the magistrates. The reason for the second suggestion is that magistrates are inclined to feel that when *they* try a case an innocent man has no need of professional representation and that for other defendants it would simply be a waste of the court's time. Further reasons why so few certificates are granted are that the expense falls on local funds and that solicitors are reluctant to take these cases because the fees are considerably lower than those paid for the prosecution.

It is important to remember that the position of the accused person is only one aspect of the legal aid problem: the parties to civil proceedings may be just as hard, and even harder, hit. All these matters are at present under consideration by Lord Rushcliffe's committee, recently appointed by the Lord Chancellor, and it is to be hoped that the general public will realise that for most of them the chances of obtaining legal justice will largely depend on the report of this committee and the legislation that is subsequently passed. ROBERT EGERTON

Cambridge House,
131 Camberwell Road, London, S.E.5.

ROYAL SOCIETY

SIR,—Without wishing to enter the argument further, may I be permitted to comment briefly upon one of the statements made by Professor Andrade. Referring to the history of the Royal Society round about 1840 he says, "They are not days of great glory . . . for British science."

Now, as he tells us in his autobiography, it was in 1839 that Darwin first clearly conceived his theory of natural selection. Moreover, only eight years previously, in 1831, Faraday had carried out his epoch-making work on electro-magnetic induction, which was presented to the Royal Society in 1841. Since, during the years around 1840, two Englishmen who no one would deny are to be numbered among the very greatest scientists of all time, were engaged in their greatest work, it would seem that contrary to what Professor Andrade says, these were days of very great glory indeed to British science.

Reading. S. J. FOLLEY

FASCIST PROPAGANDA

SIR,—As I walked up Tottenham Court Road this evening, I overheard this remark passed between two men in earnest conversation: "And is that the only point in Mosley's programme with which you do not agree?" Can anyone enlighten me on whether Mosley has once more entered the political arena with a programme, whether it is Fascist in temper and content, and whether, if so, Mosley is permitted to propagate it? ANTI-FASCIST

THE PILGRIMS' WAY

SIR,—Walking along the Pilgrims' Way above Reigate on a recent morning we met a dozen soldiers marching informally and easily but two by two. They wore denims, steel hats, and carried light packs, but no arms or identification marks. The leader stopped us and asked where the path would lead him—Colley Hill we told him—were they on the Pilgrim's Way? Yes. Where was he heading for. Canterbury, from Winchester. We could not resist it. Have you Belloc's book with you? No, the colonel has that; he's cheating. Even at this stage of the war we hesitated to question him further, but the whole party were obviously enjoying this novel form of training. M. HARRINGTON

TRANSLATION

SIR,—Shortly we shall be editing a series of collections of translated work in both poetry and prose. The majority of these translations will be contemporary and the series will be appearing under the title of *Translation* (*London*). We should be most glad to see any work of this nature that your readers might care to submit to us. A verdict on all manuscripts submitted will be given within one month.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE idea of speed leaves a deposit of disgust in the British system. A host of lantern-jawed Jeremiahs and public-house moralists comes gloomily to life in every generation and denounces the modern mania for going fast. Ruskin was not the first when he attacked the railways. Before him there had been denunciation of the fast mail coaches of the late eighteenth century. We were the first to disapprove of speedy travel because we were the first to invent it; and by now the disapprobation is part of the slow, ruminative, traditional theory of British character. A sentimental literature of slow travel has been built up to support the theory, and I doubt if there is any other country in the world whose books of travel so constantly advise the reader to loiter. Yet it would not be correct to put down this cult of slowness entirely to the industrial revolution. In large countries where the distances between one town and even one village and the next are great, the curious traveller misses little by travelling fast. The Spanish or Russian train is more rewarding to the enquirer into human nature than the Spanish or Russian road; and I have no doubt that it would be boring to go on horseback or on foot across most (though not all) parts of the United States. But in small and crowded countries, like Britain where villages are only a mile or two away from one another, where the flavour of life is intense and varied underneath an apparent uniformity, slow travel is an advantage. As we dash from London to Bath, or from London to Glasgow, we can feel the sand of repressed desires getting into our hair, the deposit of travellers' guilt forming inside us, and the hankering after lost pleasure when the train or the motor car stops and leaves us in the silence of a nameless countryside. One must be struck by the fact that there has scarcely been a good book about English journeys, since the time of Cobbett's jog trot round the southern counties; and the only possible conclusion we can come to is that we have mistaken our country. We have learned the virtues of slow travel, but we have used them abroad. It has become a sentimental cult, a rebellion against industrialism, an escape.

Yet we have in England, and still alive, the slowest form of locomotion known to man; the journey by canal. Walking may be slower, but I doubt it. (There are "fly boats" on the English canals, like the old high flyers of the coach roads, which work day and night and rush from London to the Mersey in eight days. Few of us could manage that.) There is a choice in roads, the canal lays down its own mild but arbitrary law. Indifferently it cuts into the lost villages, the astonishing empty spaces of the English countryside, and then goes like a worm into the hidden rubbish heaps of the industrial scene. The forgotten manor farms of Warwickshire stand on its banks with the unreality of a house on a picture postcard; and then, impartially, the seamy water stagnates among the horrible backways of pretentious towns like Leicester or the kippered walls of the Potteries. Like some bedraggled and outcast female tramp, the creature sleeps in the fields and knocks at the back doors of the towns. There can be no more assured way of seeing a cross section of modern England than from the dead level of the "cut," and there are 2,000 miles of navigable water.

To see it is one thing; to understand it quite another. I jumped this week at the chance of finding out more about the canals in a new book *Narrow Boat**. The author, who is an engineer, bought his own boat, fitted her out, and travelled from Banbury into the Midlands in the summer and winter of 1939-40. He went as far north as Middlewich and as far east as the line Nottingham, Leicester and Northampton. The Midland canals thrive fairly well. They carry the coal from the collieries, on shortish journeys, and I believe they are the last home of the family-owned boat or Number One. This was a good region. It was uncharacteristic of the English canals only in one respect; it was far away from the chief ports on which the canal system is based. The scene at Liverpool and its environs, for example, is more animated than on the lonely stretches of the Midlands. But Mr. Rolt did not set out to explore England or even to exhaust the subject of the English canals. He saw them as the last vestige of the old, sane way of life which held in England, until the industrial revolution and especially the railways began its destruction. He saw in the boatmen and the boat-builders a dying race of craftsmen and men true to their trade, who had retained the old standards in their isolation. He went to the England of the canals to get away from the England of the arterial road, the mushroom towns and factory belts, and to discover the remains of that rural England which the towns had starved and emptied. When he fitted his boat at the ugly town of Banbury, and watched Mr. Tooley, the boat repairer, painting the traditional castles and roses on his boat, when he heard the talk at the locks, or the sing-songs at those isolated pubs where the boatmen gather in the evening, he felt he was escaping from our world into a world where living was better understood. And as he stood at the ram's head, the rudder-post of his boat, and watched the slowly passing country, the reeds growing into the cut and the birds rising from them—the dabchick, the soft flying heron and the hoiking swan—he had the illusion that he was sharing in this life, and he regarded the land world with the misanthropy of a meditative man. It is like the misanthropy of anglers, gardeners and naturalists whose slow and solitary occupations and plodding devotion with nature, quietly poison the mind as they soothe the soul. As a writer Mr. Rolt does very well; he is interested, curious, well-informed, sensitive, and he is moved by his delightful theme. His descriptions are sedate and unpretentious. But his portraits are few and unremarkable. It is a serious defect that he gives little beyond a general idea of what the boatmen are like. Solitaries perforce—it was nothing to go for three days without seeing another boat—and living in enclosed communities, they are probably very difficult to know.

Here an unpoetic enquiry into the economics of the canals might have revealed a good deal. At the beginning of the war, the wages of the boatmen were, roughly speaking, on the level of the agricultural wage. The hours are long, and though hard work is not continuous, still at the end of the day the boatman would be called upon to hump 50 tons of coal off the boat to the wharf on his own back. By no means did he always travel with his family; indeed, near the ports, the boatman is like the lorry driver—a man away from home four or five nights a week. He moored his boat far away from the diversion of the town and the young generation were easily tempted away from a trade so lonely and ill-paid. Mr. Rolt is glad the older boatman cannot read or write and that his children have not picked up the half-baked education of the Council schools; but the children have rebelled against this eccentricity. And though the one-process factory worker who builds a ship one day and a bridge the next, may not have the manifold dexterity and resourcefulness of the old craftsman, it would be absurd to say that craftsmanship does not exist in modern factories; or that the education of children is a mistake. The family boatman, the aristocrat of the old "Number One," appeared to live on a higher level than the crews employed by the carrying companies. His boat was clean, its brass shone, its gypsy decorations flashed their lovely colours; and his average income of £7 a week looked handsome. But commonly the boats go in pairs and each pair is manned by a skipper, a mate and a boy. The £7 is divided. £3 10s. for the captain, £2 10s. for the mate and £1 for the boy was not much. The young got out while they could.

Mr. Rolt saw the canals in their last phase of relative freedom. In 1940 there was an attempt to make them relieve the strain of war transport. They were planned. Canteens were set up; for food rationing has taken the pleasure out of the gypsy life. I do not know but, planning, always dreaded and often attacked by people who are free and have enough, may have started to save the canals from ruin. It is a strange world where the gypsies have to be regulated in order that gypsydom may survive. And even so, though canteens, as dreary as the Caffs of lorry-drivers, spring up along the canals, the boatman can still secrete a gun aboard for the odd chance, he can still bait a piece of wire with fat and hope for a duck, he can still get ashore and pick a cabbage—"rotting on the ground," as the boatman always puts it—or dig himself a root of potatoes. Every traveller has a bit of poacher inside him. I wish Mr. Rolt had come closer to these people who are far from homogeneous, and had told us more about their customs. To work on the boats would be the only way to find out. Perhaps, after a little more of the despised Council school education, we shall get a boatman's story, comparable to those one or two life stories which agricultural labourers have written in the last few years. From one point of view no writer can honestly regret the present dislocation of our culture, for the best moment of all to write is at the parting of the ways.

The engineering of the canals is a fascinating subject, and Mr. Rolt is very interesting about it. Of James Brindley, "the father of the English canals," it has been said, "He would rather go round an obstacle in the shape of an elevated range of country than go through it." He saved in tunnelling and lockage and "accommodated the people." And so the boats at Marston Doles go round and round like people in a maze and turn four miles distance into eleven as they rise to the summit level at Claydon. The stairways of locks, the "Cheshire locks," thirty-two of them, which take a day to work through on to the plain of Cheshire near Middlewich; and then the tunnels; these make the drama of the subject. The old horse boatmen used to send a runner ahead to get the locks ready; and through the wide tunnels the crew lay on outrigged boards and "legged" their way through, by pushing their feet against the walls. Leggers could be hired at one time, in the longer tunnels, and a tunnel like Standege, on the Huddersfield Narrow, is 5,500 yards long. You "legged" if you could not get a tow or a tug. The connoisseur of mechanical contraptions should not overlook the Harecastle tug. One of the Harecastle tunnels built by Brindley in 1777 after eleven years' work has now fallen in; but the other which Telford planned is still used. An electric tug takes its current from an overhead cable in this tunnel and draws itself along by a cable on the bed of the canal, a cable that is picked up on a winch and paid out astern. Mr. Rolt was tugged through the tunnel, and it took his boat three-quarters of an hour. It was a weird journey under the dripping roof, in the cold darkness which was lit by the blue electric sparks from the cable overhead. For those who like cave explorations, there are numbers of canal tunnels in a derelict state in many parts of the country. They are the early slug trails of industrial man. V. S. PRITCHETT

* NARROW BOAT. L. T. C. Rolt. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 12s. 6d.

THE CONDITION OF MAN

The Condition of Man. By LEWIS MUMFORD. *Secker and Warburg.* 25s.

This book is the third of a series, the first two volumes of which were *Technics and Civilisation*, published in 1934, and *The Culture of Cities*, 1938. In these three books Lewis Mumford undertakes to set forth the adventure of mankind in search of life. In particular this latest volume, written in the midst of the explosion of civilisation, is a story of death and rebirth, of the death of the modern era and the beginnings of a new world.

The argument is worked out through an examination of the history of western cultures, for the new era, like previous new eras, cannot

be made out of wholly new material; it must embody the addition of new materials, especially science, to the essential characteristics of humanity, which include historic memories both conscious and unconscious.

> He who knows only the events of the last generation or the last century, knows less than nothing about what is actually happening now or what is about to take place. So far from being overwhelmed by the accumulations of history, the fact is that mankind has never consciously carried enough of its past along with it. Hence a tendency to stereotype a few sorry moments of the past, instead of perpetually rethinking it, re-evaluating it, reliving it in the mind. . . . People whose course of life has reached a crisis must confront their collective past as fully as a neurotic patient must unbury his personal life.

Accordingly, Mr. Mumford begins with the Athenian culture that culminated in the Periclean Age, and left as a permanent value in our own cultural tradition the doctrine of the middle way. Yet this noble and balanced social organism of the Greeks disintegrated for lack of a sense of human brotherhood, because of slavery, parochial selfishness, life-destroying attitudes to sex, and inability to cope with the wealth that came with foreign commerce.

Then came the Romans, a people nurtured in hard agricultural labour and rural simplicity. With conquest and power they easily became a race of practical business men, helpless victims of luxury, sunk in prideful charity, and the corrupting superstitions of the East. So the Mediterranean world flamed into a feverish glory which, as Turner says in his *Great Cultural Traditions*, was not a real increase of wealth but an orderly liquidation of the hitherto unexploited assets of the bordering peoples. And at the peak of the false glory and growing spiritual despair, Jesus planted the seed that was to grow through strange transformations into the next great organised culture, medieval Christendom.

By the year 1200, the Western World was integrated. Christendom was

> not the world of Jesus of Nazareth, but the world that his historic mission had finally brought into being. . . . In his aesthetic consciousness, the medieval craftsman, even the dumb peasant, lived on a higher level than his modern counterpart; his feelings were more fully developed if his intellect was less sharp; and though his domestic life was coarse his public functions were often magnificent, for he daily had the experience of a sacred art which as yet did nothing to sacrifice its austerity or its depth to meet a degraded popular demand.

Then in 1347 came the Black Death. We remember the shock of World War I, when sixteen million people died of war and disease. To be comparable to the Black Death, that war would have had to kill 600 million. The medieval world was not vital enough to stand such a shock. The Church had become corrupted; the beginning of capitalism broke down the whole medieval ideology, by substituting the ideal of monetary thrift for the spiritual ideal which the Church, with its growing commercialism, had already undermined. Interest on loans ceased to be a sin. Protestantism, in Mr. Mumford's view, was not the source of capitalism, but a largely unsuccessful revolt against its effects on secular and religious life, of which the most evident surviving element is the Co-operative movement.

The discovery of America, and the growth of physical sciences, opened the New World culture which has now gone up in flames. There were high hopes of escape from the tyranny and cruelty that had followed the loss of the medieval adjustment. More's Utopia, and others less well known, record the dreams of happier countries to be found or built somewhere in the romantic lands of the West. America itself is the greatest of those romantic dreams. But the other side of discovery and conquest, geographic and scientific, was the vast opportunity for the lust of power. The very virtue of science, its detachment from subjective emotions, rendered the powers of science inhuman, equally valuable for death or for life. There were even theories that purported to make man himself a machine and the helpless puppet of economic forces. The final catastrophe of the age of expansion came with the logical progression of amoral materialism into the mass paranoia of the Nazis, and the lethargic response of the money-drugged democracies.

Through this sombre picture, Mr. Mumford traces the lines of humanistic thought and aspiration, beginning chiefly with Rousseau and spreading down through "Chateaubriand and Hugo and George Sand, Cooper and Thoreau and Whitman and Melville, even a Goethe, a Kant, a Tolstoi, an Emerson"—men who in one way or another have transmitted a belief in the value of man in his relations with nature and society. The roots from which the next culture will spring are alive, and the feeling is widespread that springtime is on the way.

Mr. Mumford is a philosopher's philosopher; his picture of the new culture is on a high level of abstraction. We are past the "age of expansion," and we look for an age of dynamic equilibrium, in which the material gains of technology are balanced by spiritual gains in social adjustment and the development of the whole man; progressing evenly and sanely toward an ideal that is only beginning to take form. There he leaves us to work out for ourselves the plans for action on the levels of government and business, education and religion. It is for others to get down to brass tacks.

The only reference to the New Deal is a sarcastic dismissal of the Abundant Life. Conspicuously absent from the bibliography and the index are such names as Henry Wallace, Franklin Roosevelt, William Beveridge and David Lilienthal of the T.V.A. Yet somewhere there must be a series of judgments, lines of reasoning by which the high abstraction of "human values" is connected with the institutions and plans that are proposed for shaping the social and economic adjustments of the new culture.

Somewhere we must work out the relation between the ideal and the material, and even more important, we must work out the relation between the imperfections that cannot be wholly avoided and the life-force that is pushing strongly toward the future. If we succeed in creating full employment, with the motive set forth by Beveridge, to release men from degradation, will all our efforts be poisoned by the multiplicity of gadgets and escapist diversions? Is the T.V.A. really a romantic adventure in social living, or one more chain binding men to the whirling dynamo? Is the "abundant life" something to get, or something to give? Are all our reforms only new outlets of the will to power? From a book like this of Mr. Lewis Mumford's, one can easily get the feeling that in all man's strivings and ideals, the poison of original sin still lurks, and every good custom corrupts the world—only the blind life-force bursts out again and again from disaster into new growth.

In the long run, perhaps that is how it is. But to-day we have had disaster, and spring appears to be coming. It is not proved that Henry Wallace, hoping to find ways that everyone may have a quart of milk, is seeking only the material, for desiring to bring food to others who are hungry has its spiritual aspect. Sir William Beveridge and men of similar mind in America, who fight the means-test, are not wholly preoccupied with material things, for there is a feeling that people must not be wantonly humiliated even in misfortune, that charity is not kind. This feeling may well be one of the budding shoots of the religion of the future. For all such questions, as we feel our way toward the new light, we need not only workable plans, Those who lead the thinking in this generation need a wide historic orientation, and to many of them Mr. Mumford's book will provide stimulating food for thought.

DAVID CUSHMAN COYLE

THE REAL HUNGARY

In Darkest Hungary. By G. PALOCZY-HORVATH. Introduction by MICHAEL KAROLYI. *Victor Gollancz.* 5s.

To the English reader, surfeited with descriptions of that brightest Hungary with wine of Tokay, gypsy music, hospitable landlords and picturesque peasants, it may come as a relief to learn something of its undercurrents of oppression, persecution, corruption, misery and squalor. *In Darkest Hungary* fully satisfies this demand. Although written with a sense of humour and even of idyll, it crudely reveals the treachery which helped the Hungarian oligarchy to acquire and retain power, and the sufferings of the landless peasants crammed into pigsties, so hungry and so proud that they had to belch to show how good their non-existent soup had been.

The writer speaks as a farm labourer, a descendant of much-harassed Magyar serfs, who combines the studied simplicity of a Rousseauesque savage with a considerable knowledge of scholarly and political literature. He shows how in this war "our lords" the landowners and bureaucrats sold out Hungary to reactionary foreign interests, not for the first time in history. The myth of the "pro-British" Hungarian aristocracy and gentry, such as the Counts Bethlen and Teleki and the like, is exploded by the real story of Hungary's participation in Hitler's war—a participation which justifies Count Karolyi in saying, in the Introduction, that Hungary's pro-German foreign policy and the semi-feudal structure of her society were "indissolubly linked, for without the help of the Germans it would have been impossible for Hungary's lords to maintain their anachronistic rule. . . ." Mr. Paloczy-Horvath also shows the tragedy of the Hungarian people, and especially of its poorest classes who have never had any say in the affairs of their country. He concludes:

> We shall be punished because we were driven like cattle into the war against our Yugoslav and Russian brethren. They probably hate and despise us. Our lords are armed to the teeth against us. Those men who can talk hope into us, who can awaken us to action, are mostly in prison or abroad—Go ahead and punish us.

The first person plural of the "farm labourer" is as rich in dramatic appeal as it is in pitfalls. It induces the story-teller to develop a counter-myth of serfdom, similar, in many of its points, to the squirearchic myth which he was trying to destroy. He attributes to the revolutionary spirit of the ancient serfs the struggles for national independence against the Turks and the Habsburgs because these had "wanted our language"; whereas, in fact, the Turks cared more about their wheat than about their language; the Habsburgs cared only about the language of officialdom, not about that of the peasantry; and national independence was the business of the lords who were the only people who stood to gain by it. The masses, led by the poet Petofi in Pest, on March 15th, 1848, who carried out the Hungarian Glorious Revolution, did not consist of the tillers of the soil as one might think from his description, but of Jacobin intellectuals and shop assistants; the peasantry hardly knew what the rising was about. "Our leaders," those of the serfs and servants, to-day as well as in the past, extolled by the writer, came, with very few exceptions, either from the dissatisfied nobility, the liberal bourgeoisie and the industrial workers; or, if they had come from peasant stock, they were the first to betray their Socialist comrades to the White Terrorists in 1919 (S. Csizmadia) or to appreciate the Hitlerite version of Socialism in the late thirties (P. Veres); but the writer, after quoting some of their fiery diatribes, ignores their depressing backgrounds. The result is that the reader must wonder why the highly intelligent, purposeful, brave majority of the Hungarian population has never been able to free itself from the dictatorship of a tiny minority which apparently consisted of venal cowards and short-sighted cranks.

The Hungarian peasantry cannot of course be blamed either for the spiritual somersaults of its

restive offshoots or for the dull passivity with which it has, as a whole, for the last four centuries, practically without a break, tolerated and even admired its oppressors. Hungarian history supplies the explanation and the exculpation. But it is one thing to understand facts and another to embellish them; the dark picture drawn by Mr. Paloczy-Horvath would not be as genuine as it is were those he speaks for as articulate as they appear to be in his book.

PAUL IGNOTUS

EYE-WITNESSES

African Trilogy. By ALAN MOOREHEAD. *Hamish Hamilton.* 18s.

The Waiting Year. By RICHARD DIMBLEBY. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 10s. 6d.

Ever since war became a matter of organised armies and campaigns there have been men to report it: the line reaches back to Herodotus and Homer. Yet there is no groove into which the modern war reporter can step, no pattern to which he can conform; he is like the child learning to walk—the fact that men have been walking upright for thousands of generations does not help him in making the first step. Moreover, in this age of specialisation the war reporter has to be something of a Jack-of-all-trades. He has to be soldier and writer, adventurer, political commentator and artist, thinker and man of action. It is therefore not surprising that most war correspondents should lack one or other of these diverse qualifications, that their work should be, for the most part, of an ephemeral and utilitarian nature.

But Alan Moorehead is the rare exception. He is, in all ways, perfectly equipped for his task. He is more than that; there is something of genius in the breadth and penetration of his vision which encompasses the whole panorama of war and then narrows it down to the particular: the soldier stubbing out his cigarette before going into action, the expression of a tank commander's face as he is hit. *African Trilogy* includes in one volume his three books on the war in Africa, from Wavell's beginning in 1940 to Eisenhower and Alexander and Montgomery's triumphant conclusion in 1943. Again and again one is struck by the many-sidedness of the author's mind, by the vividness of his descriptions of battles and the men who fight them, by his comprehension and lucid exposition of the grand strategy, by his political insight, and, most of all, his deep sense of humanity. The three separate books gain here from being read consecutively, for just as the campaigns quicken and their scale grows throughout the three years, so Mr. Moorehead's understanding and grasp of his subject become profounder with experience. In the end it is his sense of humanity that leaves the predominant impression, his realisation of the great deeds that were done in this war side by side with the terrible tragedy and waste of war itself. The story of the African campaigns will go down in history as one of the great epics of mankind, but it will do so largely thanks to Mr. Moorehead's account, which makes one of the most remarkable books of this, or any other modern, war.

The Waiting Year is an account of the people of England during the year preceding the invasion of Europe as seen through the eyes of a war correspondent returning from the Middle East. It suffers from the comparison with *African Trilogy* because Mr. Dimbleby lacks the insight and vision of Mr. Moorehead. As correspondent he is competent, with an eye for detail and a gift for straight reporting, but his gift stops there and he makes the mistake of attempting to go beyond his limitations. The book would have been better had it not been written in a half fictitious form so that you are never sure what is fiction and what fact. Mr. Dimbleby makes a sincere attempt to portray England during that year of waiting, but one cannot help feeling that Mr. Moorehead, in one chapter dealing with a flying visit to England, completely captures the essence which somehow eludes Mr. Dimbleby throughout an entire book.

W. P. RILLA

TWICE REMOVED FROM DOUGHTY

The Golden Carpet. By SOMERSET DE CHAIR. *Faber.* 15s.

Lawrence owed much to Doughty, and Captain de Chair owes a good deal to Lawrence. Such debts are in no way dishonourable, but they have to be paid, and that usually means that the debtor in paying has to give himself away or even to give up part of himself. Captain de Chair does both. His book has already earned fame among the élite, or rather the wealthy, for, like Lawrence's masterpiece, it was first published (in two parts) in small "de luxe" limited editions for the very wealthy at 20 guineas and the wealthy at 6 guineas. Now it is made "available to the general public," i.e., to you and me, for 15s.

It has no claim to stand by the side of *Arabia Deserta*, and it hardly stands up to the *Seven Pillars*. It is a lively and very interesting book about an interesting episode in the present war. It is first-class "reportage," which is a modern and slightly bogus term for what our innocent fathers called journalism. (Our forefathers, in their innocence, distinguished "literature" from journalism, and occasionally wrote "literature" when they thought they were writing journalism; when we write journalism we call it reportage, and thus delude the ingenuous—writers as well as readers—into thinking that it is "literature"). It holds your attention even if the wireless is going full blast with dance music or the Brains Trust—and I doubt whether anyone could say the same of *Arabia Deserta*. Captain de Chair was Intelligence Officer in the column under Brigadier Kingstone which in 1941 marched from the Mediterranean into Iraq and captured Bagdad from the pro-German insurgents who, under Raschid Ali, had revolted against the Iraq Government. The campaign was a remarkable achievement, and the strategical results had an importance which cannot be measured by numbers of troops engaged, for it probably saved the Near East from German domination. Captain de Chair gives a vivid account of this exciting adventure, as seen through the eyes of a junior officer in close touch with the leader of the expedition. He is a lively, indiscreet, and somewhat naive narrator. He makes the tactics extremely clear, though it is difficult to get from his book a very accurate picture of the operations as a whole, in particular why the enemy capitulated when he did. The portraits which he draws of his fellow-officers are amusing and, for the victims, sometimes uncomfortably frank. After the fall of Bagdad he went north with the column and was severely wounded in the action against the French at Palmyra. Some of the best pages in his book describe the sufferings of the wounded in the muddle and confusion which were a distressing feature of that part of the campaign.

LEONARD WOOLF

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

MOZART: *Piano Concerto in A* (*K.*488). Denis Matthews with Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. by George Weldon (Col. DX 1167–9).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Fifth Symphony*. The National Symphony Orchestra, cond. by Sidney Beer (Decca K1032–6).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Second Piano Concerto in G*. Moiseiwitsch with Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. by George Weldon (H.M.V. C3410–3).

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MIASKOVSKY: *Twenty-first Sympyony.* U.S.S.R. State Orchestra (Decca K.571–3).

RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF: *Easter Overture.* N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, cond. by Stokowski (H.M.V. DB6173–4).

THOMAS: *Mignon Overture.* N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, cond. by Toscanini (H.M.V. DB6177).

STRAUSS (JOHANN): *Roses of the South Waltz.* Hallé Orchestra, cond. by Barbirolli (H.M.V. C3408).

HANDEL: *Violin Sonata No. 4 in D.* Yehudi Menuhin accompanied by Marcel Gazelle (H.M.V. DB6175–6).

BARTOK: *Roumanian Folk Dances* (arr. Szekely). Yehudi Menuhin, accompanied by Marcel Gazelle (H.M.V. DB6178).

FAURE: *Nocturne in D flat* and *Barcarolle in G.* Kathleen Long (Decca M574 and 575).

BIZET: } "In Memory I lie" (*Pearl Fishers*).
VERDI: } "Spir'to gentil" (*La Favorita*).
Heddle Nash with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (H.M.V. C3409).

HANDEL: "Waft her Angels" (*Jephtha*). Webster Booth with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. by Malcolm Sargent (H.M.V. C3414).

It does not do to disregard Edward Fitzgerald's acute remark about the *strength* of Mozart's music. To play it as if its exquisiteness were brittle is to miss the toughness and elasticity of classical form and texture, as well as to deprive the melodic material of its depth and seriousness. Greatly as I admire the delicacy of Denis Matthews' playing, I cannot help feeling that the extreme refinement of touch with which he delivers the solo part in Mozart's A major Concerto emasculates the whole conception. A concerto is, after all, a drama—in this case subtle and melancholy, if you like, but also grand—and the passage-work, in particular, ought to sound far more sparkling than it does here. In every other way this set is a model: the orchestral part is beautifully balanced and the tempi are just right.

The diffusion and enfeeblement of classical form appear very clearly in a comparison of Mozart's Concerto in A with Tchaikovsky's in G. The latter has been almost entirely neglected, until recently, in favour of No. 1 in B flat minor. The reasons for this neglect are not obvious, for the two works are closely similar in all salient features. But it must be admitted that the first movement of the Second Concerto is, in spite of incidental beauties, inferior to its more famous brother. The movement—indeed the whole work—was revised and drastically shortened under the composer's eye, by Siloti; but the result lacks cohesion and logic. The sequences are nearly always too long for what they contain, the frequent climaxes are built up in a horribly mechanical fashion, and the material of the second group is much too weak for such diffuse treatment. The best music in the movement occurs in the double cadenza, which here serves as the development section. The pianist cuts several passages and alters others without thereby improving the whole. The Andante and Finale, which contain some charming and vital music, fare much better at his hands. The recording is oddly subdued in some places—not in this case an advantage; if this concerto is to survive—and it deserves an occasional hearing—it must be played in the grand style and allowed to have its head.

In his Fifth Symphony Tchaikovsky achieved a suite of movements which pleases all but the severe, and it is understandable that Decca should wish to have the work on their list, though excellent recordings exist elsewhere. This one adds nothing startling to what we have heard before, except Dennis Brain's horn solo in the Andante. The level of orchestral playing is good; but the Finale is a bit stodgy, and I think it a bad idea to make a turn-over just before a climax.

On the whole Tchaikovsky's symphonies show a crescendo of ability; it seems questionable whether the same can be said of Miaskovsky's. I am ignorant of all but a small number of works by this prolific composer; but it seems that, having started as a turgid "revolutionary" (I recall some horrible Scriabinesque symphonies, way back in the early Twenties), he settled down into the contemporary academic style and became a kind of Russian Arnold Bax. His 21st (*sic*) Symphony is a one-movement fantasia which belies its title because it is wholly lacking in the sense of *space* essential to symphonic construction. The orchestration is heavy and the total effect dull in the extreme. The work is finely played, but the discs "swing" badly. A music-hungry public will surely question the policy of expending shellac on this kind of music, merely because it happens to be Russian.

The same stricture applies, though in a lesser degree, to Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Easter Overture.* This is not wholly boring because it is a *tour de force* in instrumental brilliance; but the composition itself is a perfunctory one. The performance and recording are suitably melodramatic.

Ambroise Thomas's music is still alive to-day because he wrote in a tradition that was alive in France at the time, though it never had been in England; so that to compare *Mignon* with Goring Thomas's *Esmeralda* is equivalent to comparing Ingres's *La Source* with a Royal Academy nude. The Overture is a good example of the potpourri style universal in romantic opera; the airs are charming and Philine's Polonaise is a classic of its kind, as well as being a clever description of the lady's character. Mignon herself—one of the most touching characters in all fiction—comes off less well. The performance is a vigorous one, with plenty of glitter and not too harsh.

These are the qualities we look for in Johann Strauss—in this case, I'm afraid, in vain. This recording of *Roses of the South* has its points: the string playing is magnificent and the general sound-texture luscious. But the rhythm is heavy and insufficiently elastic. English orchestras simply have not the temperament for this kind of thing.

Menuhin's latest recordings are, as usual, most beautifully played—so beautifully, in fact, as to distract one's attention from the quality of the music. The Handel Sonata is not in itself of the first interest; but even an average work of so high a kind becomes worth possessing when it is played like this. Of the Bartok Dances it is only fair to say that they contain rather more music, and less mere rhythmical pattern, than most of the composer's work in this genre. The extended violin pianissimo at the end of the first side is a miracle of control and has an original beauty of sound.

The Fauré *Nocturne* and *Barcarolle* are the best kind of French music in the pure Chopin tradition: mellifluous, passionate, and perfectly written. Miss Long is an adept at this kind of music, and although I do not feel that she gets quite as much out of the *Nocturne* as is there, her playing of the *Barcarolle* (less well known but equally beautiful) leaves nothing to be desired.

Heddle Nash's singing is better suited to the Serenade from Bizet's *Pearl Fishers* than it is to the famous aria from *La Favorita*, to which he gives a softness and cloudiness quite foreign to the style. "Waft her Angels," on the other hand, is a notable record. The air is preceded by a curious and wonderfully interesting recitative—"Deeper and deeper still." This is Baroque opera at its most expressive, and Webster Booth delivers it with fine tone and real eloquence of phrasing.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST.

Burma Surgeon. By GORDON S SEAGRAVE. *Gollancz. 9s*

Dr. Gordon Seagrave escapes the pitfall of egoism, the danger of all autobiographists; long ago he lost a sense of self-importance in devotion to his work. *Burma Surgeon* is a chronicle of a young American medical missionary's life struggle against ignorance, pestilence and disease among the malaria-ridden natives of Northern Burma. The story races on as a day-to-day diary of the retrea with Genera Stilwe from the inferno of the advancing Japanese armie and the courage with which the writer faces th

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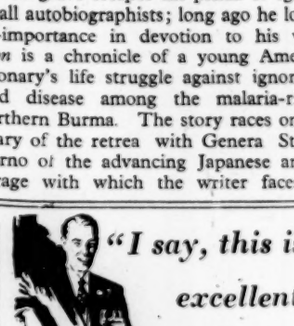

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collapse of his life's work stands out like a concrete building on a skyline of rubble and chaos. With no pretensions to literary style, this is an interesting book, because it is the history of a brave man. The story is told in the swift, deft manner of the surgeon, the man who has met every emergency, the man who has turned teacher, plumber, builder, ambulance driver and soldier as occasion demands, and whose sense of the ridiculous has kept him sane in surroundings calculated to unhinge a less resilient mind. Evangelising the native was a matter of secondary importance. From the squalid rudiments of a medical settlement, Dr. Seagrave and his wife raised, partly with their own hands, a modern stone hospital, branch hospitals, a nurses' home and a travelling dispensary to outlying parts of the jungle. He was obsessed by the need to impart his medical knowledge to the native, and from a population speaking a variety of jungle languages, he trained a school of nurses. One of his first recruits was the daughter of the chief torturer. When Dr. Seagrave and his staff became attached to the Chinese 6th Army, these nurses worked fearlessly day and night through the rain of Japanese bombs. In the retreat, working side by side with the Burmese nurses, Americans learnt to admire and respect the courage and heroism of these women. Dr. Seagrave's success in Burma was bound up with his genuine and unpatronising friendship for the people and his willingness to teach by example. A modest man, he makes one claim only—that of being an able teacher.

* * *

Owing to a misprint, in last week's review of M. J. MacManus's book on De Valera, Mr. Frank Pakenham was made to say: "The intransigent nationalist's debut as champion of nationalism at Geneva would have caused less of a sensation . . . ." What caused the sensation was his emergence as champion of *internationalism*, as a good number of readers probably grasped.

Week-end Competition

No. 777

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered for the best set of three clerihews about characters in Miss Austen, Balzac, Dickens, Henry James and Proust.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 774

Set by C. Urchin

We offer the usual prizes for a letter (not more than 200 words) written by a customer to his wine-merchant in view of Christmas.

Report by C. Urchin

The tone of the letters varied from subtle flattery to blackmail. Few writers seemed confident of a favourable answer, but this may have been due to seasonal caution. One competitor wrote to say that he had refrained from sending an entry because he knew his wine-merchant to be a reader of this journal; in any case, he thought the competition not in the best of taste. More use might have been made of irony. Roast beef and Ruby! I'd *prefer* a British type vermouth! Would the peppery aroma of that sub-Algerian gain or lose by being well *chambré*? The first prize goes to H. Gordon for a piece of sentimental blackmail, and to C. S. Cook for his variations on the triolet; second prizes to W. H. G. Price and Godfrey Martin.

FIRST PRIZES

Dear Mr. Smith,

I do not want to let this time of the year pass without sending you the compliments of the season. Exactly a year ago I was able to recommend you to our C.O. in the Home Guard for a stripe and brought it off even though the old man thought the promotion rather rapid. If the stand down had not come, I would now have recommended you for full Corporal. Well, H.G. days are over now, I can only hope that I have made things as regards guard duties and parades as easy as I could for you.

I expect lots of visitors for Xmas and hope that I shall be able to give them a really jolly time.

Our pullets are coming along fine, in fact we get more eggs than we need for the family.

I shall drop in during the next few days, just to shake hands with you once more in the old year. Knowing how busy you are just now, I shall, of course, call outside business hours.

Kindest regards from the wife and myself,

Yours,
" Sergeant " (H.G., ret.).
H. GORDON

A stockbroker to his friend the wine merchant:

Dear Dick,

Please send one dozen sherry. Be a good friend dear Dick. Please send of whiskey no end. So we be merry, dear Dick, please send one dozen sherry.

Also some port Dick, the best that you've got, of your cellar the pick. Also some port Dick. Have you some Heidsieck? I think that's the lot—also some port Dick, the best that you've got.

You will I hope dine with us—we've got a large turkey—and maybe take wine with us? You will I hope dine with us, it bids to be fine with us—the night may be murky—you will I hope dine with us, *we've got a large turkey.*

No wise man neglects yours faithfully Tom. Just watch the effects. No wise man neglects for " England Expects " and so do I. From (no wise man neglects),

Yours faithfully,
Tom. C. S. COOK

SECOND PRIZES

My dear Smith,

I sincerely hope that your cold has quite gone, old fellow. You must look after yourself you know—you're too valuable to be spared during the Festive Season. Thinking of colds reminds me of my dear old dad's remedy. He used to say: " Go to bed with a bottle of whisky and a bowler hat. Hang the hat on the bedpost and climb into bed with the bottle. Fix your gaze on the bowler and sip the whisky conscientiously. When you begin to see two hats you're more than half cured." Only his joke, of course; actually he was a most moderate man. But what spacious days those were when one could joke about whisky!

The wife, I regret to say, has not been well lately: I fear that she is suffering from lack of her mid-morning tonic since our supply of South African sherry ran out. She especially wants you to tell Mrs. Smith that there is no need for her to concern herself about Christmas poultry—one of the fowls that we have been fattening is reserved for you. Truly, war doth make poultry-keepers of us all! Take great care of yourself.

With best wishes,
J. Brown.

P.S.—I'll trot along with the bird myself a few days before Christmas. W. H. G. PRICE

Dear Sir,

Income Tax £523 19*s.* 11*d.*

The above amount is an arrear of Tax incurred prior to the last taxable period on which we had correspondence, and I am instructed to bring this to your notice, as you are probably under the impression that my last receipt for moneys paid to me cleared your Income Tax liabilities up to date.

Kindly give this matter your immediate attention, as the payment of this sum of £523 19*s.* 11*d.* is now long overdue. Yours faithfully,

— —
Collector of Taxes

(Hand-written):

P.S.—It now appears that the above demand may be due to a clerical error. I will go into the matter and report personally, as I have to pass your shop to-morrow in any case. Perhaps I could at the same time take home the Xmas whisky you promised me last year? Could you go into the question by to-morrow, and see how many bottles you can let me have?

GODFREY MARTIN

BARCLAYS BANK (DOMINION, COLONIAL AND OVERSEAS)

FURTHER EXPANSION

THE ordinary general meeting of the stockholders of Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) will be held at 29, Gracechurch Street, E.C., on Thursday, Dec. 28.

The following is an extract from the statement of the chairman (Sir William M. Goodenough, Bt.) which has been circulated with the report:

The notice convening this meeting is followed by a notice of an extraordinary general meeting to be held on Thursday, Jan. 11, 1945, the purpose of which is to sanction an alteration in our Articles to permit of the appointment of an additional deputy chairman of the bank.

Turning to the balance sheet, the figures again show further expansion. Current, deposit and other liabilities stand at the record figure of £282,175,976, or £34,402,377 higher than in the previous year, while cash in hand and money at call have increased from £87,285,289 to £102,028,404. Investments at £94,593,274 are £11,664,048 more, while advances are £3,631,782 higher at £84,606,571. The board have made the same allocations as last year to our reserve fund, which has accordingly been increased by £600,000. The proportions in which the funds of the bank are distributed amongst the various classes of assets are almost identical with those of last year. I feel, however, that it is only right to point out that these figures are in very large measure the direct result of war conditions.

I much regret to report that our staff serving in the Forces have suffered further losses during the year, the total number notified as killed or missing now being 108. To their relatives and friends we tender our deepest sympathy. We have now 1,048 of our staff in the Forces, many of whom have won decorations.

THE OUTLOOK

Looking back over the course of the war, now, we hope, approaching its final stages, we may well feel thankful that our widely dispersed branches overseas have not received more damage during these past five years. We have been fortunate indeed in that not one of them has been over-run by the enemy. We can also be grateful for the fact that we have been able to be of service to the authorities during the war in so many overseas territories, and to the members of our fighting Services themselves, particularly in the Mediterranean area and in the Middle East. In many parts we have rendered similar service to our American Allies and to the Forces of so many of the United Nations. I think we may confidently feel that this bank will be able to play a useful part in assisting post-war development throughout Africa, in the West Indies, in the Middle East and elsewhere.

In recent years the colonial policy of this country has been subjected to criticism, much of which has been both misleading and unfair. We must realise that our ideas, our institutions, and ways of life, cannot be easily transplanted to other lands and to other peoples whose tradition and environment are essentially different from our own. If they are to flourish, they must be allowed to take root and in some cases growth will be slow. A lively interest in the Empire, and perhaps particularly in our colonial territories, by people at home, will, I believe, contribute more than anything else towards a solution of these problems. The war has unquestionably had the effect of increasing public interest in these territories, and the means of development have already been greatly facilitated through the medium of air transport.

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